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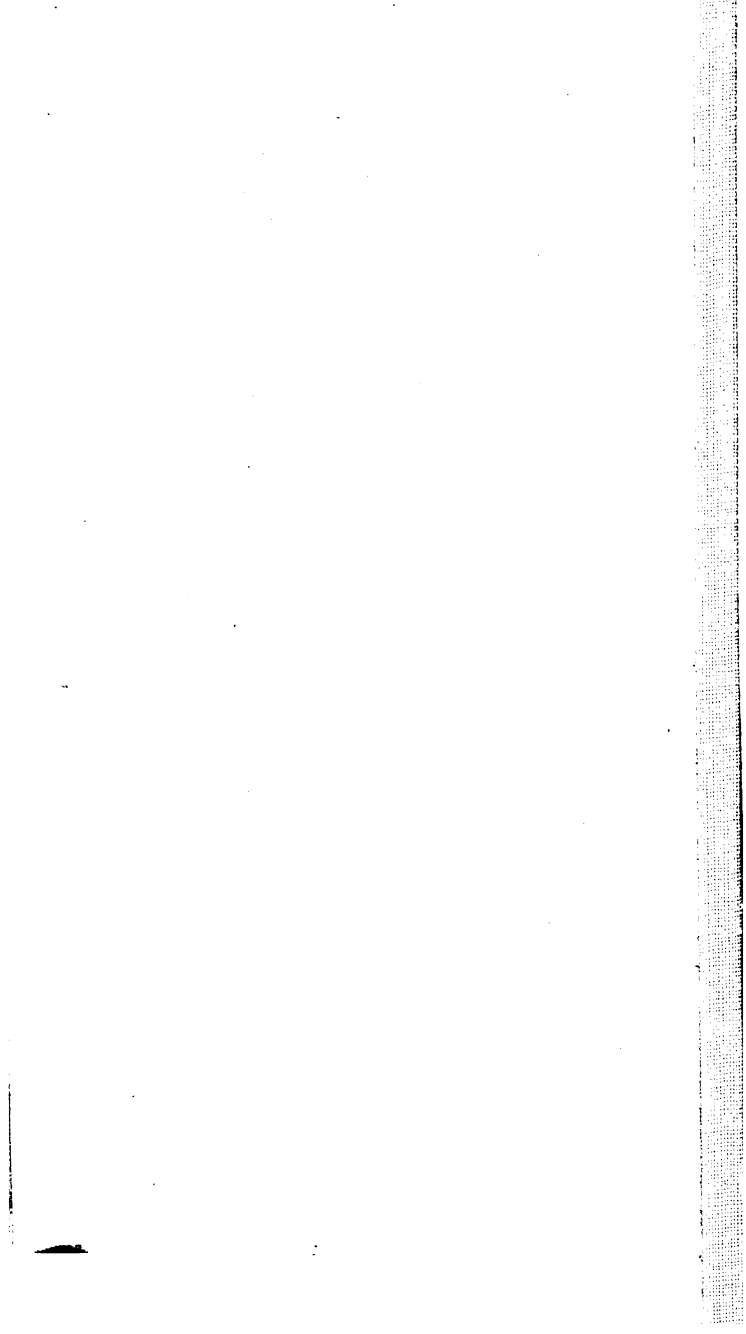
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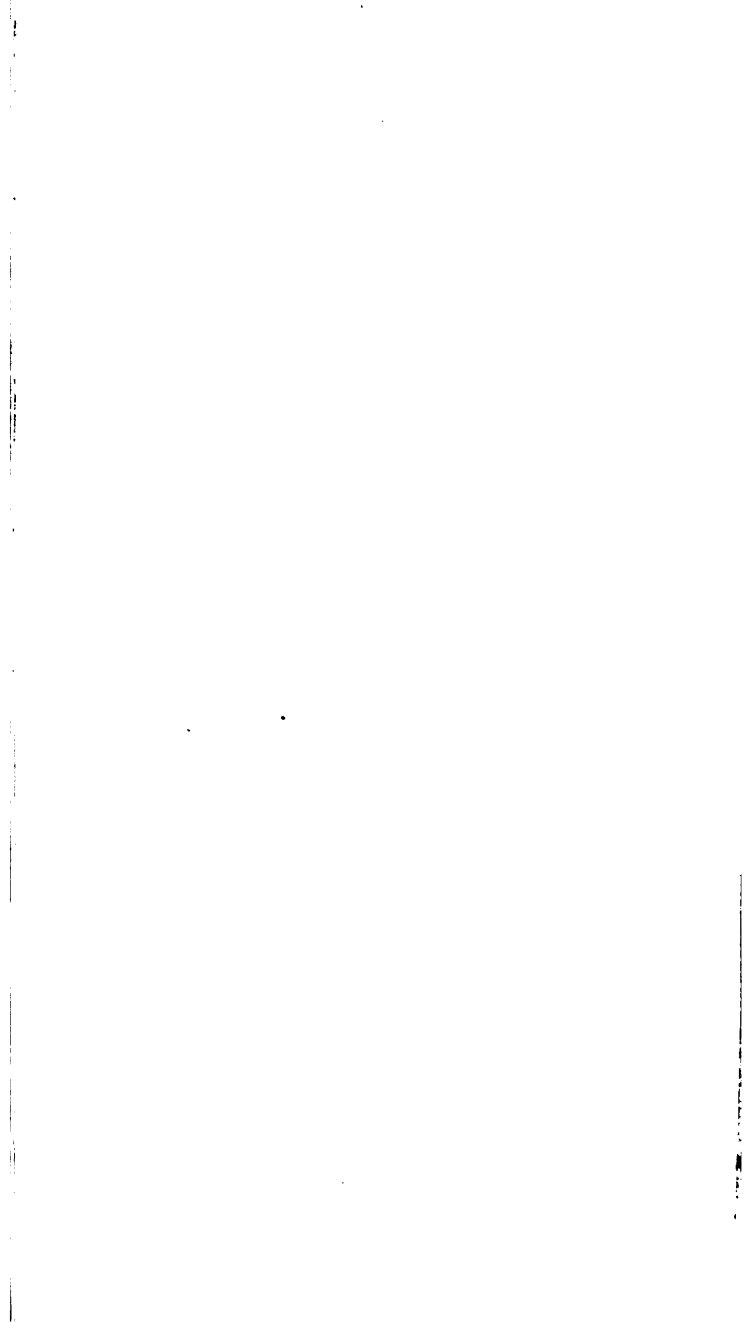
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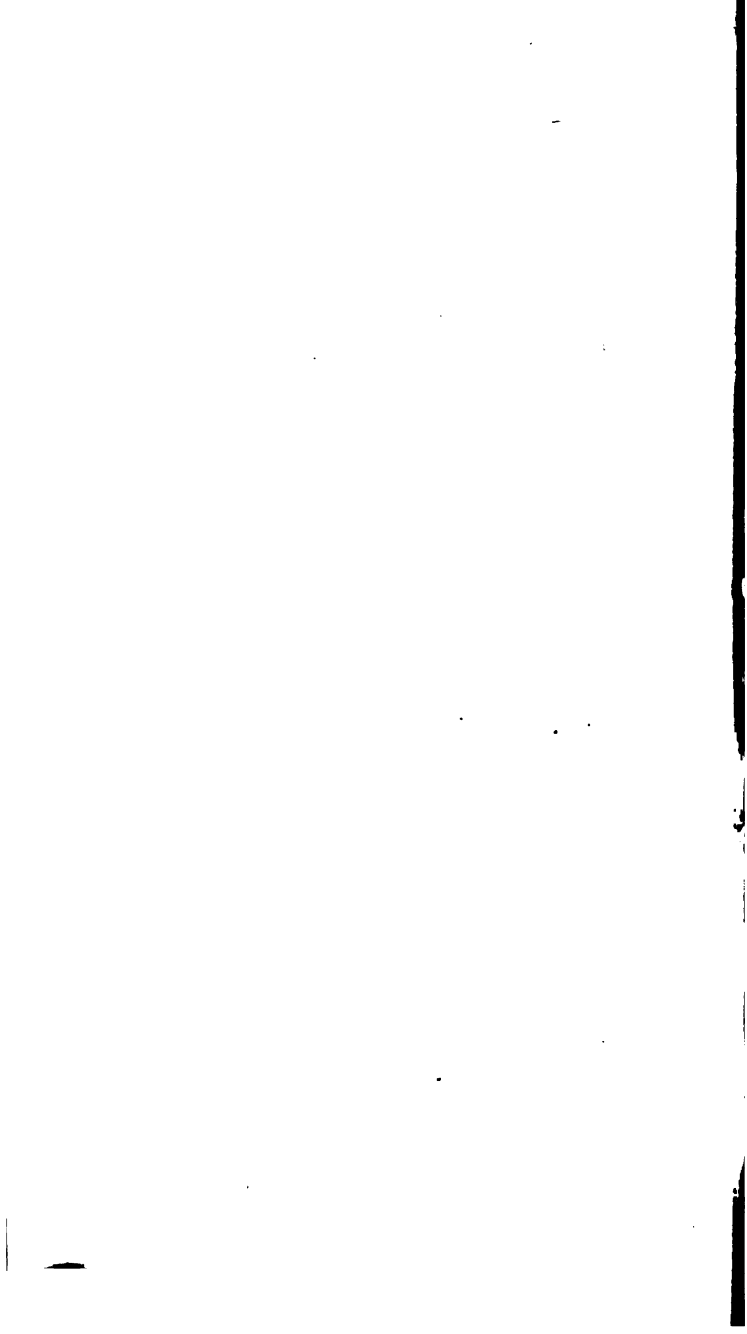
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MEMOIRS  
OF  
MARMONTEL,  
VOL. I.

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MEMOIRS  
*G. M. Marmontel*  
MARMONTEL,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

CONTAINING

HIS LITERARY AND POLITICAL LIFE,

AND

ANECDOTES

OF THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

VOL. I.



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# MEMOIRS OF MARMONTEL, &c.

## BOOK I.

FOR my children I write the history of my life; their mother wished it. If it should meet the eyes of a stranger, let him pardon details which, to him, must appear trifling, but which I conceive important to them. My children stand in need of lessons, that time, opportunity, example, and the various scenes through which I have passed, have afforded me. I wish them to learn, from me, never to despair of their own efforts, and never to be too confident of success; to fear the rocks of good fortune, and to pass with courage the straits of adversity.

I have had over them the advantage of being born in a place where the inequality of rank and fortune was scarcely felt. A small property, industry, or a little trade, composed the fortune of almost all the inhabitants of Bort, an inconsiderable town in Limosin, where I first drew breath. Mediocrity there held the place of wealth. Every one was there independent, and usefully employed; and hence the native boldness, candour, and nobleness of the mind were there never sullied by humiliation. In no place was foolish pride worse received, or sooner corrected. I may therefore assert, that, during my childhood, although born in obscurity, I knew only my equals; and from this circumstance, perhaps, I derived a certain degree of stiffness, which has formed a part of my character, and which even reason and years have never been able to wear away.

Bort, seated on the Dordogne, between Auvergne and Limosin, presents a fearful picture to the first view of the traveller, who, at a distance, from the top of the mountain, sees it, at the bottom of a precipice, threatened with inundation by the torrents which the storms occasion, or with being crushed by a chain of volcanic rocks, some planted like towers on the height which commands the town, and the others already pendant and half torn from their base. But Bort assumes a pleasant aspect when the cheered eye wanders across the valley. An island, covered with verdure, that lies beyond the town, embraced by the river, and animated by the noise and motion of a mill, is a complete aviary. On the banks of the river, orchards, meadows, and corn-fields, cultivated by a laborious people, form a variety of scenery. Below the town, the valley opens, presenting, on one side, an extensive meadow, watered by plentiful springs; and, on the other, fields crowned by a circle of hills, whose gentle slope forms a pleasing contrast with the opposite rocks. Farther on, this circle is broken by a torrent, which, from the mountains, rolls and bounds through forests, rocks, and precipices, till it empties itself into the Dordogne.

dogne by one of the most beautiful cataracts of the continent, both for the volume of water, and the height of its fall ; a phenomenon which only wants more frequent spectators to be renowned and admired. Near this cataract lies the little farm of Saint Thomas, where I used to read Virgil under the shade of the blossoming trees that surrounded our bee-hives, and where their honey afforded me such delicious repasts. On the other side of the town, beyond the mill, and on the slope of the mountain, is the garden where, on welcome holidays, my father used to lead me to gather grapes, from the vines he himself had planted, or cherries, plums, and apples, from the trees he had grafted. But the charm that my native village has left on my memory arises from the vivid impression I still retain of the first feelings with which my soul was imbued and penetrated, by the inexpressible tenderness of my parents towards me. If I have any goodness in my character, I am persuaded that I owe it to these soft emotions ; to the habitual happiness of loving and being loved. Ah ! how invaluable is the gift of heaven, when it presents us with affectionate parents !

I was also much indebted to a certain amenity of manners, which at that time predominated in my native place ; and, indeed, the innocent and agreeable life we led there must have had some attraction, since nothing was more rare than to see the natives of Bort removing elsewhere. Their children were instructed, and their colony distinguished itself, in the neighbouring colleges ; but they returned again to their town, like a swarm of bees to the hive, with the sweets they had collected.

I had learned to read in a little convent of nuns, good friends of my mother. They taught only girls ; but in my favour they made an exception to this rule. A lady of birth, who had long lived retired in the convent, had the kindness to take care of me. I ought indeed to cherish her memory, and that of the nuns, who loved me as their child.

From the convent I went to the school of a priest of the town, who, gratuitously and from inclination, had devoted himself to the instruction of children. This divine was the only son of a shoemaker, the worthiest man in the world, and a true model of filial piety. How well do I recollect the becoming respect and mutual attentions that the old man and his son had for each other ! The former never forgetting the dignity of the priesthood, nor the latter the sanctity of the paternal character. The abbé Vaissière (that was his name), after having fulfilled his duties at church, divided the rest of his time between reading and the lessons he gave us. A short walk, when it was fine, and some times, for exercise, with a game at bandy, in the meadow, were his only amusements. He was serious, severe, and of a commanding countenance. His whole society consisted of two friends, who were men much esteemed in our town. They continued to live together in the most peaceful intimacy, meeting every day, and finding each other every day the same, without change, without diminution in the measure of each other's society ; and, to crown all, they died at the same period. I have scarcely seen an example of so kind and constant an equality in the course of human life.



At this school I had a school-fellow, who, from my infancy, was an object of my emulation. His sage and steady air, his constant application to study, the care he took of his books, on which I never saw a single spot, his fair hair always well combed, his coat always clean, although coarse, and his linen always white, were for me a striking example; and it is rarely the case that one child should inspire another with the esteem I had for him. His name was Durant. His father, a labourer in a neighbouring village, was acquainted with mine: I used to walk to his village with his son, to see him. How kindly the good old grey-headed man received us! what good cream, good milk, and good brown bread he gave us! what happy omens, he was pleased to say, he saw in my respect for his age! Alas, that I cannot go to strew flowers on his grave! He ought to repose in peace, for his life was spent in doing good. Twenty years afterward, his son and I, pursuing very different routes, met at Paris, and I recognised in him the same sage and correct character that distinguished him at school: nor was it a trivial satisfaction to me to stand godfather for one of his children. But let us return to my early years.

My Latin lessons were interrupted by a singular accident. I had a great desire to learn; but nature had refused me the gift of memory. I had enough to retain the sense of what I read; but the words left no traces on my mind: I took infinite pains to fix them there; but it was like writing on quicksand. I obstinately endeavoured, by application, to supply the defect of my memory: this labour exceeded the powers of my age; my nerves were affected by it. I became like one who walks in his sleep: in the night, when fast asleep, I used to sit up in my bed, and, with my eyes half open, repeat aloud the lessons I had learned. He will go mad, said my father to my mother, if you do not make him leave off learning that unfortunate Latin; and the study of it was quickly suspended. But, at the expiration of eight or ten months, I resumed it: and, when I had completed my eleventh year, my master, thinking me sufficiently advanced to be taken into the fourth class, my father consented, though with regret, to take me himself to the college of Mauriac, which was the nearest to Bort.

This regret of my father was that of a prudent man, and I ought to justify him. I was the eldest of a great number of children; my father, a little severe, but essentially kind, under a rough and stern exterior, loved his wife to adoration, and with reason; my mother was the worthiest and most interesting of women, and most amiable in her family. I never could imagine how, with the simple education of our little convent at Bort, she had acquired so much polish of mind, and so much elevation of soul; and, particularly, in her language and style, there was an expression of propriety so just, so delicate, so fine, that it appeared in her to be the pure instinct of taste. The good bishop of Limoges, the virtuous Coetlosquet, has often spoken to me, at Paris, with the tenderest interest, of the letters my mother had written to him, to recommend me to his kindness.

My father had as much veneration as love for her. The thing he had to reproach her with was her weakness for

this weakness had one excuse : I was the only one of her children that she had suckled ; her too feeble state of health no longer permitted her to fulfil so pleasant a duty. Her mother was not less fond of me. I can imagine I now see the good little old woman : what a charming temper ! what sweet and smiling gaiety ! She was the housekeeper, the mistress of the family, and gave us all an example of filial tenderness ; for she too had her mother and her husband's mother, on whom she lavished her attentions. I am going rather far back, when I talk of my great-grandmother's ; but I well remember that, at the age of eighty, they were still living, drinking their little cups of wine by the fire-side, and recollecting old times, of which they recounted to us wonderful tales.

To these may be added three sisters of my grandmother, and the sister of my mother, my aunt, who is still living : yet, in the midst of these women and of a swarm of children, my father found himself alone. With very little property we all subsisted. Order, domestic arrangement, labour, a small trade, and, above all, frugality, kept us in comfort. Our little garden produced nearly as many vegetables as the consumption of the family required : the orchard afforded us fruit : and our quinces, our apples, and our pears, preserved with the honey of our bees, were, in winter, most exquisite breakfasts for the good old women and the children. The little flock of sheep, that were folded at Saint Thomas, alternately clothed the women and children with their wool ; my aunts spun it ; they spun too the hemp of the field, that furnished us with linen ; and the evenings, when, by the light of a lamp, fed with the oil of our nut-trees, the young people of the neighbourhood came to peel our fine hemp with us, formed an exquisite picture. The harvest of our little farm assured our subsistence ; the wax and honey of the bees, which one of my aunts carefully attended to, formed a revenue that cost but little ; and the oil pressed from green walnuts had a taste and smell that we preferred to the flavour and perfume of olive oil. Our buckwheat cakes, moistened, smoaking-hot, with the good butter of Mont-d'Or, were a delicious treat. I know not what dish would have suited us better than our turnips and chesnuts ; and, in a winter's evening, while the fine turnips were roasting round the fire, and we heard the water in the vase boiling our chesnuts, so relishing, and so sweet, our hearts palpitated with joy. I well remember too the perfume that a fine quince used to exhale, when roasting beneath the ashes, and the pleasure our grandmother used to take in dividing it among us. The most moderate of women made us all gluttons. Thus, in a family where nothing was lost, trivial objects, united, made plenty, and but little expense was necessary to satisfy all our wants. In the neighbouring forests there was an abundance of dead wood, of little or no value ; my father was permitted to take his annual provision there. The excellent butter of the mountain, and the most delicate cheeses were common, and cost but little ; wine was not dear ; and my father himself drank of it prudently.

However, the expense of the house, though extremely moderate, did not fail to be nearly the measure of our little revenue ; when I was to be placed at college, the foresight of my father

exaggerated the expenses of my education ; besides, he considered the time that was given to study as but ill employed : he used to say that Latin only made sluggards. Perhaps, too, he had some presentiment of the misfortunes we experienced in seeing ourselves deprived of him by a premature death ; and, by making me early embrace a profession whose utility should be less tardy and less uncertain, he might think to leave in me a second father to his children. Yet, pressed by my mother, who was passionately desirous that at least her eldest son should receive a classical education, he consented to take me to the college of Mauriac.

Loaded with caresses, bathed with tears, and charged with benedictions, I sat out with my father. I rode behind him ; and my heart beat with joy ; but it beat too with alarm, when my father said to me : " They have promised me, my dear boy, that you shall be admitted into the fourth class ; if you are not, I shall bring you back again, and all will be over." Judge how I trembled, when I appeared before the master who was to decide my fate. Fortunately, it was the good father Malosse, to whose kindness I am so much indebted : there was in his look, in the sound of his voice, in his physiognomy, a character of benevolence so natural, and so feeling, that his first approach announced a friend to the stranger who addressed him. After having received us with his usual goodness, he invited my father to come back and learn the success of the examination I was about to undergo ; and seeing me still timid, he began by encouraging me ; he then gave me an exercise, as a trial : this exercise was full of difficulties, that to me were insoluble. I did it ill ; and, after having read it, " Child," said he to me, " you are very far from being fit to enter this class ; you will even find it difficult to be admitted into the fifth." I began to cry. " Then I am lost," said I to him, " my father has no desire to let me continue my studies ; he has only brought me hither out of complaisance to my mother ; and he declared to me on the road, that, if I were not admitted into the fourth, he would take me home again. That would be very hard on me, and very afflicting to my mother ! Ah ! for pity's sake, take me ; I promise you, my father, to study so hard, that you shall shortly be fully satisfied with me." The master, touched with my tears and my good will, admitted me ; and told my father not to be unhappy about me, for he was sure I should do well.

I was lodged, as was the custom of the college, with five other scholars, at an honest mechanic's in the town : and my father, sad enough to return without me, left me there with my satchel and provisions for the week : these provisions consisted in a large loaf of rye bread, a little cheese, a piece of bacon, and two or three pounds of beef ; my mother had added to them a dozen apples. This was the weekly provision of the best fed scholars of the college. The mistress of the house cooked for us, and, for her trouble, her fire, her lamp, her beds, her lodging, and even the vegetables of her little garden, that she furnished for our soup, we gave her twelve-pence halfpenny each, per month ; so that reckoning every thing, except my clothes, I might cost my father between four and five pounds a year. This was a great deal for

him, and it was an expense I was very anxious to spare him. The day after my arrival, as I was going in the morning to my lesson, I saw my master at his window, who beckoned me to go into his chamber. My son, said he, you have need of private instruction; and much study, to overtake your fellow-students: let us begin with the rudiments; and come hither half an hour before lectures every morning, to repeat to me the rules you have learned; in explaining them, I will point out their use. I wept also on that day, but it was for gratitude. In returning him thanks for his kindnesses, I begged him to add that of sparing me, for some time, the humiliation of hearing my exercises read aloud in the lecture room. He promised it; and I went to my studies.

I cannot express with what indulgent zeal he undertook the care of instructing me, and what charm he had the art of giving to his lessons. At the bare name of my mother, of whom I sometimes spoke to him, he seemed to breathe her very soul, and when I communicated to him the letters, in which maternal love expressed its gratitude to him, tears flowed from his eyes.

From the month of October, in which we then were, to the Easter holidays, there was neither amusement nor relaxation for me; but, after that half year, becoming familiar with all the rules, firm in their application, and, as it were, disengaged from the thorns of syntax, I proceeded with more freedom. From that period, I was one of the best scholars in the class, and perhaps the happiest: for I loved my task; and, as I was almost certain of doing it tolerably well, it was only a pleasure to me. The choice of words, and their appropriate use, in translating from one language to another, with even some elegance in the construction of phrases, began already to engage my attention; and this employment, which cannot be effected without analyzing the ideas, fortified my memory. I perceived that it was the idea attached to a word which fixed it upon the mind;—and reflection soon convinced me that the study of languages is also the study of the art of distinguishing the shades of ideas, of decomposing them, of forming their texture, and of catching with precision their characters and their relations;—that, with words, as many new ideas are introduced and developed in the mind; and that our youthful first classes presented a course of elementary philosophy much more rich, more extensive, and more eminently useful, than is imagined by those who complain that nothing is taught in colleges but Latin.

This exercise of the mind in the study of languages was remarked to me by an old man, to whom my master had recommended me. This old Jesuit, father Bourges, was one of the best Latin scholars of his time. Although employed in continuing and completing the work of father Vanière, in his poetical Latin dictionary, he had humbly asked to teach the fifth class in this little college in the mountains of Auvergne. He took a liking to me, and invited me to go and see him on holidays. You will easily believe that I did not fail to do so; and he had the kindness, occasionally, to dedicate whole hours to my instruction. Alas! the only service I could render him was to wait on him at mass; but

that was a merit in his eyes ; and for the following reason. When this good old man was in the act of devotion, he was perpetually tormented, lest his attention should be diverted from his prayers, a diversion from which he defended himself by the most painful effort of the mind : in saying mass, he particularly redoubled his efforts, to fix his thoughts on every word he pronounced ; and, when he came to the words of the sacrifice, as he bowed, drops of sweat fell from his bald forehead. I have observed his whole body tremble with respect and terror, as if he had seen the vault of heaven open, and the living God descend. Never was there an example of a more lively and profound faith : the energy with which he performed his sacred functions seeming almost to exhaust him.

The pleasure he took in teaching me, and that which I felt in receiving his instructions, used to revive him. From him I learned that ancient literature was an inexhaustible source of richness and of beauty, and by him I was inspired with that thirst for it which sixty years of study have not been able to extinguish. Thus, in an obscure school, I had the good fortune to obtain for a preceptor one of the most learned men, perhaps, in the world. But this was an advantage I did not long enjoy : father Bourges was removed ; and six years afterward I found him in a monastery at Toulouse, infirm, and almost abandoned. How odious was it, in the institutions and manners of the Jesuits, to abandon their aged members ! The most laborious of men, whose services had been of the longest duration, no sooner became incapable of exertion than he was totally neglected ; a cruelty as foolish as it was inhuman, among beings fast approaching to the grave, who, in their turns, would each feel its effects.

With regard to our college, its distinctive character was a police exercised by the scholars over themselves. In each chamber was a mixture of scholars of the different classes, amongst whom the ascendancy of age or talent, naturally established, produced order and regularity in our studies and behaviour. Hence the boy who, at a distance from his family, appeared, when out of school, to be abandoned to himself, did not fail to find monitors and censors among his fellow students. They studied together round the same table ; forming a circle of witnesses, who, under each other's eyes, reciprocally imposed silence and attention. The idler became weary of silent inactivity, and was soon disgusted with his indolence : the dull boy, if diligent, was pitied, aided, encouraged ; if his talents were not admired, his willingness was esteemed ; but, for the incurable sluggard, there was neither pity nor indulgence ; and if it happened that all who lodged in the same house were tainted with this vice, it became dishonoured ; the whole order despised it, and parents were advised not to place their children there. The inhabitants themselves had, therefore, a great interest in lodging only studious boys ; and I have seen some turned out solely on account of their indolence and want of discipline. Thus, in scarcely one of these groups of children was idleness tolerated ; and never was study preceded by amusement or recreation.

A custom which I have never seen, but in this college, gave, toward the end of the year, redoubled energy to our studies. To rise from one class to another, it was necessary to undergo a severe examination, and one of the tasks we had to accomplish was a work of memory. According to the class, if in poetry, we had to learn by heart some lines of Phædrus, Ovid, Virgil, or Horace; and, in prose, parts of Cicero, Livy, Quintus Curtius, or Sallust: the whole forming a very considerable mass of study. We began it long before the examination; and, that it might not trench on our usual studies, it employed us from day-light to the morning's lesson, as we walked in the fields, where, divided into bands, with each his book in his hand, we went humming along, like swarms of bees. It is painful, in early youth, to tear oneself from morning sleep; but the most diligent of the band roused the more tardy: I myself have been frequently pulled asleep from my bed; and, if I have since had a little more suppleness and docility in my memory, I owe it to this exercise.

Our scholastic habits were not less distinguished by a spirit of order and economy than by a taste for study. The new-comers, however young, learned from the older boys to be careful of their cloaths, linen, books, and provisions. Every piece of bacon, beef, or mutton, that entered the boiler, was neatly strung, one upon another, like the beads of a chaplet; and if the pieces became mixed, and any dispute arose, the mistress of the house was the arbitrator. As to the dainty bits, that, on certain festivals, were sent us by our families, they were eaten in common; without even excepting those who never received any. I recollect, with pleasure, the delicate attention that the most fortunate of our little troop always observed to prevent the others from feeling this mortifying inequality. When any of the presents arrived, the mistress of the house announced it to us; but she was forbidden to name the boy to whom it was sent; and he himself would have blushed to boast of it. This modest caution was the admiration of my mother, when I informed her of it.

Our amusements were chosen from among those of the ancients: in winter, on the ice, amid the snow; in fine weather, far in a field, in the heat of the sun; and neither racing, wrestling, boxing, the game of quoits, nor the sling, nor the art of swimming, was unknown to us. In the heat of summer, we used to go and bathe at above a league distance from the town: the little boys trying for cray-fish in the brooks, and the great boys fishing for eels and trout in the rivers, or catching quails with nets after harvest, formed our most agreeable pleasures; and on our return from a long ramble, woe to the fields where the green peas were not gathered. Not one of us would have been guilty of stealing a pin; but, in our moral code, it had passed into a maxim, that what could be eaten was no theft. I abstained as much as possible from this species of pillage, but, without co-operating in it, it is still true that I shared it, first in furnishing my contingent of bacon for cooking the peas, and afterward in eating them with all the accomplices. To do like the rest appeared to me a duty, from which I dared not deviate; but I capitulated afterward with

my confessor, by restoring my part of the theft in . I perceived, however, in a class above mine, a boy whose prudence and virtue were unalterable, and I said to myself that the only good example to follow was his; but, while I regarded him with the eyes of envy, I did not dare to suppose I had the right to distinguish myself like him. Amalvy had so many titles to consideration in the college, and was so far superior to us all, that the kind of interval he left between us and himself was considered as just and natural. In this rare youth, all the excellences of mind and heart appeared to have been united to render him perfect. Nature had given him that exterior which appears to be reserved for merit alone. His countenance was noble and gentle, his figure tall, his deportment grave, his air serious, but serene. I used to see him enter the college perpetually surrounded by some of his school-fellows, who were proud to accompany him. Sociable with them, without familiarity, he never divested himself of that dignity which arose from the long habit of surpassing his equals. The cross that was the mark of this priority never quitted his button-hole; and no one thought of pretending to deprive him of it. I admired him; it was a pleasure to me to look on him; and, as often as I saw him, I returned dissatisfied with myself. Not that I was without a sufficient degree of distinction in my class from the time I entered the third; but I had two or three rivals; Amalvy had none. I had by no means acquired, in my compositions, that invariable success which astonished us in his; and I had still less of that ready and sure memory with which Amalvy was gifted. He was older than I; this was my only consolation; and my ambition was to equal him when I should arrive at his age. In analysing, as much as possible, what used to pass in my mind, I may say, with truth, that this sentiment of emulation was unmixed with any malignant idea of envy; I was not sorry that an Amalvy existed, but I would have prayed to heaven that there might be two, and that I might be the second.

The spirit of religion, that was carefully maintained in the college, was a still more precious advantage than emulation. How salutary a preservative for the morals of youth is the custom and obligation of going every month to confession! That modest, chaste, and humble avowal of our most secret faults prevented, perhaps, a greater number of them than the purest possible motives.

At Mauriac, therefore, from the age of eleven to fifteen, I pursued my classical studies; and in rhetoric I almost habitually kept my place as first in my class. My kind mother was charmed at it; and when my dimity waistcoats were returned to her, she eagerly looked to see whether the silver chain, that used to suspend the cross, had blackened my button-hole; and if she perceived that mark of my triumph, all the mothers of the neighbourhood were told of her joy; our good nuns returned thanks to heaven for it; and the eyes of my dear abbé Vaissière sparkled with pleasure. The most cherished of my recollections, to this hour, is the happiness I gave my mother; but I had as much care

to disseminate my griefs as I had pleasure in telling her of my success; for I had some sorrows that were sufficient to have afflicted her if the least complaint had escaped me. One of these was the dispute I had, when in the third class, with father Bis, the head master of the college, about the dance of Auvergne; another, the danger I once ran of being flogged, when in the second class, and in that of rhetorick, for having dictated a good theme; and the third, for having been to see some clock-work. Fortunately I extricated myself from these errors without accident, and even with some glory.

It is well known what envious malignity favourites draw upon themselves at the courts of kings: it is the same at schools. The particular care that the master of the fourth class had taken of me, and my assiduity in going to see him every morning, made my companions look on me with a jealous and suspicious eye; and from that time I made it my study to shew myself a better and more faithful school-fellow than any one of those who accused me of not being so, and who chose to distrust me. When I afterward became frequently the first of my class, a dignity to which the unwelcome office of censor was attached, I made it a rule to mitigate my censure; and, in the master's absence, during the half-hour I presided singly, I began by granting a moderate liberty: they used to talk, laugh, and amuse themselves, without being noisy, and my notes made no mention of it. This indulgence, which made me beloved, became every day more extended. Licence succeeded liberty, and I suffered it; I did more, I encouraged it; such was the charm that public favour had for me. I had been told that, at Rome, the rich, who were desirous of gaining the multitude, gave them public shows: it took my fancy to imitate them. One of our school-fellows, whose name was Toury, was mentioned to me as the best dancer of the Auvergnian dance that the mountains could boast; I gave him leave to dance it; and, it is true, that in dancing it, he made some marvellous jumps. When they had once enjoyed the pleasure of seeing him bound in the middle of the school-room, they could not be contented without it; and I, more and more obliging, called again for the dance. It must be observed, that the wooden shoes of the dancer were capped with iron, and that the room was laid with slabs of stone, that resounded like brass. The master, who was going his rounds, heard this strange noise; he hastened to us; but the noise instantaneously ceased, and each was in his place; Toury himself, in his corner, his eyes fixed on his book, presented nothing but the image of dull immobility. The master, boiling with rage, came to me, and demanded the note: the note was blank. Judge of his impatience: finding no one to punish, he made me bear the pains of the guilty by the tasks he gave me. I submitted without complaining; and he found me as docile and as patient, in what concerned me personally, as he had found me resolute and obstinate in not giving pain to my companions. My courage was sustained by the honour of hearing myself called the martyr, and even sometimes the hero, of my class. It is true that, in the second class, the liberty I gave became less noisy, and the resentment of the



head master appeared to soften : but, in the midst of the calm, I felt myself assailed by a new storm.

Father Malosse, who had been so fond of me, was no longer master of the second class : it was one father Cibier, as dry and as sour as the other was engaging and gentle. Without much talent, and, I believe, without much learning, Cibier succeeded in conducting his class tolerably well. He had, in a singular degree, the art of exciting our emulation by provoking our jealousy. If an inferior scholar did at all better than usual, he extolled him with such an air as to make the best fearful of a new rival. It was in this spirit that, recollecting one day a certain theme that an indifferent scholar was said to have composed, he defied us all to equal it. Now it was known who had written this theme, which was so excessively praised. It was kept secret, because it was severely forbidden in the class to do the exercise of another. But the impatience at hearing borrowed merit commended to excess could not contain itself : the theme, father, that you are thus extolling to us, is not his own, cried some one. And whose is it then ? asked he, angrily. All were silent. You, then, must tell me, continued he, addressing himself to the boy who was saying his lesson. He cried, and named me. I was forced to confess my fault ; but I begged the master to hear me, and he was attentive. " It was," said I to him, " on Saint Peter's day, his birthday, that Durif, our school-fellow, invited us to dine with him : entirely occupied with feasting his friends, he had not been able to finish the duties of his class, and the theme was that about which he was most anxious. I thought it allowable and just to spare him the pains ; and I offered to employ myself for him while he employed himself for us."

There were at least two in fault : the master would see but one, and his anger fell on me. Confused, mad with rage, he ordered the corrector to be called to flog me, as he said I deserved. At the name of the corrector, I made up my packet of books, and was going to quit the school. From this time my studies were at an end, and my destiny assumed a new character. But that sentiment of natural justice, that in early youth is so rigorous and so prompt, did not permit my companions to leave me abandoned. No, exclaimed the whole class ; this punishment would be unjust ; and if they oblige him to go away, we will all go. The master was appeased, and pardoned me ; but he pardoned me in the name of the class, and justified himself by the example of the dictator Papirius. All the school approved his clemency, with the exception of the head master, who maintained that it was an act of weakness ; and that nothing should ever be yielded to rebellion. He himself, a year afterward, wanted to exert over me the rigour that he had made his law ; but he learned that justice at least should precede severity.

We had but one month more to employ in the study of rhetoric, in order to be wholly released from his authority, when he found me in the list of boys that he was about to punish for a fault that had no appearance of having been committed, and of which I was wholly innocent. In the tower of the Benedictines, two steps

from the school, the clock was under repair; curious to see its mechanism, some boys from the different classes went up into the tower. Owing to the unskilfulness of the workman, or to some accident of which I am ignorant, the clock did not go. It would have been as difficult for children to have deranged those massive wheels of iron as for mice to have eaten them away: but the clock-maker accused them of it, and the head-master received his complaint. The day after, at the hour of the evening lesson, he sent for me: I went to his chamber; I found there ten or twelve of the scholars ranged in a line around the wall, and in the middle the corrector and this terrible master, who had them successively flogged. On seeing me, he asked me if I was of the number of those who had gone up to the clock; and having answered that I had been up, he pointed out to me my place, in the circle of my accomplices, and again commenced his cruel proceedings. You will easily believe that my resolution to escape was soon formed. I seized the moment when he was holding one of his victims, who struggled under him, and I suddenly opened the door and ran away. He rushed forward to catch me, but he missed his prey, and I got off at the expense of a rent in my coat.

I took refuge in the school-room of my class, where the master was not yet arrived; my torn coat, my confusion, the alarm, or rather the indignation, that filled me, served me instead of exordium to command attention. "My friends," cried I, "save me, save yourselves, from the hands of a madman that pursues us! It is my honour, it is your own, that I recommend to you, and that I commit to your protection. That violent and unjust man, father Bis, had nearly done you the basest outrage, in my person, by dishonouring the class of rhetoric with the rod: he has not even deigned to tell me why he wanted to punish me, but, amid the cries of the children he was flogging, I understood we were accused of having deranged a clock, an accusation most absurd, and of which he felt the falsehood; but he delights in punishment, and in the flow of tears; and the guilty and the innocent are alike to him, provided he exercise his tyranny. My particular crime, an indelible one, and which he can never pardon me, is that of having uniformly refused to betray you, in order to please him; and of preferring to endure his severity rather than to expose my friends. You have seen with what obstinacy he has laboured, for three years, to make me the spy and accuser of my class. You would be frightened at the mass of study he has loaded me with, in order to wrest from me a few notes that might give him every day the pleasure of molesting you. My constancy has conquered his; his hatred has appeared to subside; but he was watching the moment to revenge himself on me, and on you, for the fidelity I have observed towards you. Yes, my friends, had I been fearful or feeble enough to have suffered him to lay hands on me, we should have been lost; the class of rhetoric would have been dishonoured, and dishonoured for ever. It was this that he aimed at: he desired to have it said, that rhetoric had bent under his mastership, and under his humiliating rod. Thank heaven, we are saved. Without doubt he is coming to

demand of you to give me up to him, and I am very sure, beforehand, of the tone in which you will answer him. But had I companions base enough not to defend me, I would, singly, make him pay dear for the loss of my honour and my life, and die free rather than live dishonoured. But far be this idea from me; I see you all determined, like myself, not to remain under this yoke: in a month from this time, our course of rhetorick is to finish, and our vacation will commence: a month retrenched from the course of our studies does not merit our regret: let to-day, then, be the end and close of the labours of our class. From this moment we are free, and that proud, that cruel, that ferocious man, is baffled and confounded."

My address had excited great indignation, but the conclusion had more effect than all the rest. No peroration ever led captive the minds of its hearers with so much rapidity. The great majority answered me with acclamation, "Yes, no more rhetorick! Vacation! and let us swear, before we leave the room, let us swear on this altar (for there was one there) never to set foot in it again."

After the oath had been pronounced, I resumed—"My friends," said I to them, "it would not become us to quit this room either as libertines or as fugitive slaves; let the head master never say that we escaped: our retreat should be peaceable and decent; and, to render it more honourable, I would propose to signalize it by an act of religion. This room is a chapel; let us return thanks to God in a solemn *Te Deum*, for having acquired and preserved, during the course of our studies, the good-will of the college, and the esteem of our masters."

In an instant I beheld them all ranged round the altar, and, amidst a profound silence, one of our companions, Valarché, whose voice vied with that of the bulls of Cantal, where he was born, chaunted the hymn of praise: fifty voices answered his, and the astonishment of the whole college, at the extraordinary and sudden noise of this concert of voices, may easily be imagined. Our master was the first who arrived, the head master came down, and the provost himself advanced gravely to the door of the school-room. The door was shut, and was not opened until after the *Te Deum* was sung: then, ranged in a semi-circle, the little boys by the side of the great ones, we suffered them to approach. "What's this disturbance?" demanded the furious head master, as he advanced among us.—"What you call a disturbance," said I, "is but a thanksgiving, father, that we render to heaven, for having permitted us to complete our first studies without falling into your hands." He threatened to inform our parents of this criminal revolt; and, looking on me with a menacing and terrible eye, he predicted that I should be the chief of some faction. He knew me but little: and his prediction is not accomplished. The provost, with more gentleness, wanted to reclaim us: but we begged him not to insist against a resolution that had been consecrated by an oath; and our good master remained alone with us: yes, good; I owe him this praise; and, though with a turn of mind less flexible and less gentle than that of father Malosse, he might

vie with him, at least, in goodness of heart. According to the idea that is usually entertained of the political character of this society, so lightly condemned, and so harshly abolished, no Jesuit was less severe in his heart than father Balme: that was his name. His character was firm and open: the impartiality, the rectitude, the inflexible equity with which he conducted his class, and the noble and tender esteem that he shewed his scholars, had gained him our respect and conciliated our love.

Through the austere decorum of his order, his native sincerity would sometimes force its way, and exhibit features of power and boldness that would have harmonised better with the courage of the soldier than with the spirit of a monk. I remember, one day, a rude boy of our class having answered him improperly, he rushed from his desk, and, tearing up an oak plank from the floor of the room, he raised it up and exclaimed—"Wretch, I will not flog a boy in the class of rhetoric, but I will knock down the insolent who dares to treat me with disrespect." This kind of correction pleased us excessively: we felt obliged to him for the fright that the noise of the broken plank had occasioned us; and we beheld with pleasure the culprit on his knees, under this club, humbly asking pardon.

Such was the man to whom I had to render an account of what had just passed. I observed him while I spoke; and, when I presented to him one of his scholars, just ready to be forced to submit to the rod, I saw his countenance and his eyes flash with indignation; but, endeavouring to disguise his anger by a smile—"Why did you not cry out," said he to me, "*sum civis Romanus*?" "I did not care to say that," answered I, "I had to face a Verres."

However, that he might not incur reproach, father Balme did all that his duty dictated, to retain us: reason and sentiment were both employed. His efforts were fruitless: he did not esteem us the less for it; and he loved me the more. My son, whispered he to me, to whatever college you go, my attestation may be of some service to you: it is not now the moment to offer it to you; but come in a month, and take it; I will give it you with a sincere and willing heart. Thus finished my rhetoric.

This year, then, my holidays were considerably prolonged; but very fortunately I found in my town an old country curate, a distant relation, a man of some learning, who taught me the logic of Port Royal, and who besides took the pains of exercising me in speaking Latin; not choosing, in our walks, to employ any other language with me than that; and which he himself spoke fluently. This exercise was an invaluable advantage to me, when, in philosophy, the course of which was given in Latin, I found myself as in a country where I had been already naturalised. But, before I pass thither, I would willingly again cast an eye over the years I have just seen elapse: I would speak of the vacations that, every year, brought me back to my home, and that recompensed my labours and my pains with such sweet repose.

The short vacations at Christmas were passed by my parents and myself in the enjoyment of our mutual tenderness, without any other diversion than that afforded by the duties of kindness

and affection. As the season was severe, my chief pleasure was that of placing myself at my ease, by a good fire ; for, at Mauriac, even during the severest cold, when surrounded by ice, and when, in going to the college, we had every morning to trace our way in the snow, we found, at the house where we lodged, no other fire, on our return, than a few half-burnt billets that kissed each other under the boiler, and at which we were scarcely permitted, in turn, to thaw our fingers. Frequently, as our hosts sat and surrounded the chimney, it was a favour to let us approach. In the evening too, when studying, our fingers, benumbed with cold, refused their office, and the lamp afforded the only flame at which we could restore them. Some of my companions who, bred on the mountains, and, hardened to cold, endured it better than I, used to accuse me of delicacy ; and, in a chamber where the cold wind blew in at the cracks in the windows, thinking it ridiculous that I should be chilled, mocked at my shivering. I even used to reproach myself for being so chilly and so tender, and often went with the others on the ice, in the deep snows, to accustom myself, if possible, to the severity of winter. I conquered nature, but did not change it : I only learnt to suffer. So that, when I went home, and, in a good bed, or by the corner of a good fire, I felt myself revived, it was one of the most delicious moments of my life ; an enjoyment that luxury could never have given.

In these Christmas holidays, my good grandmother used to confide to me, with all due mystery, the secrets of the house. She used to shew me, as so many treasures, the provision she had made for the winter. Her bacon, her hams ; her sausages, her pots of honey, her vases of oil, her piles of buckwheat, of barley, of peas, and of beans ; her heaps of turnips and chestnuts, and her beds of straw covered with fruits. " See, my dear," would she say, " these are the gifts that Providence has bestowed on us : how many honest families are there, who have not received so much as we ! and what thanks ought we to return for these favours !"

For her part, a prudent housewife, it was impossible for any one to be more moderate ; but her happiness consisted in seeing abundance reign in the house. The treat she used to give us, with the most heartfelt joy, was that of Christmas night. As it was every year the same, we all expected it ; but care was taken not to appear to do so : for she flattered herself every year that the surprise would be new ; and this was a pleasure we were careful not to deprive her of. While all were at midnight mass, the green cabbage, soup, the pudding, the sausage, the piece of salt pork, of the most lively red, the cakes, the apple fritters fried in lard, all were secretly prepared by her and one of her sisters : and I, the sole confidant of all these preparations, said not a syllable to any one. After mass, the family all returned ; and, finding this excellent collation on the table, they were loud in their praises of the magnificence of the good grandmother. Their exclamations of surprise and joy were to her a complete triumph. Beans, on twelfth-day, afforded us another subject for rejoicing ; and, when the new year came, the whole family presented such a scene of continued embraces, and such a concert of congratulation, that

it would, I think, have been impossible to witness it without being moved. Figure to yourself the father of a family, amidst a crowd of women and children, who, with their hands and eyes all raised to heaven, were calling down blessings on him, while he answered their prayers by tears of affection, which presaged, perhaps, the ill that threatened us. Such were the scenes that my vacations presented.

That of Easter was somewhat longer; and, when the weather was fine, I had time for some amusements. I have already observed that, in my little town, the education of boys was carefully conducted: their example became, to the girls, an object of emulation. The instruction of the one influenced the spirit of the rest; and gave to their deportment, their language, and their manners, a cast of politeness, of decorum, and of agreeableness, that nothing has been able to root from my remembrance. An innocent freedom reigned among us all; the girls and the young men used to walk together in an evening, by the light of the moon. Their usual amusement was singing; and, these young voices, united, seemed to me to form delicious harmony and charming concerts. I was admitted early into this society; but, before the age of fifteen, it did not at all diminish my taste for study and solitude. I was never happier than when, in the bee-garden at St. Thomas's, I passed a fine day in reading the verses of Virgil on the industry and government of these laborious republics, that prospered so happily under the care of my aunt; she had observed still better than the poet their labours and their habits: and she instructed me in them better than Virgil, by making me observe, with my own eyes, in the wonders of their instinct, marks of intelligence and of wisdom, that had escaped this divine poet, and with which I was charmed. Perhaps there was some illusion in the affection of my aunt for her bees, as there is in all affections; and the interest she took in their young swarms very much resembled that of a mother for her children: but I should say too that she appeared to be beloved by them as much as she loved them. I used to think that I saw them pleased to fly around her, to recognize, to listen to, and to obey her voice: they had no sting for their beneficent mistress: and when, in a storm, she used to take them to her, wipe them and warm them with her breath, and in her hands, it seemed that, on reviving, they gently hummed around her their gratitude. No fears disturbed the hive when it was visited by their friend; and if, on seeing them less diligent than usual, or sick, or feeble, from fatigue or age, her hand poured a little wine by the hive to restore to them force and health; the same gentle murmur seemed to return her thanks. She had surrounded their little domain with fruit-trees, that flowered in early spring; she had also introduced a little stream of limpid water, that flowed on a bed of pebbles; and, on its borders, thyme, lavender, and marjorum: in short, the plants that had the most charm for them offered them the first gifts of summer. But when the mountain began to blossom, and its aromatic herbs to spread their perfume, our bees, not deigning to amuse themselves longer with the produce of their little orchard, went forth to seek, at a distance, more

ample riches ; and as they returned, loaded with stamina of different colours, like the purple of azure and of gold, my aunt named to me the flowers that had afforded their spoil.

What passed under my eyes, what my aunt related to me, and what I read in Virgil, inspired me with such a lively interest for this little people, that I forgot myself whilst I observed them, and never quitted them without sensible regret. Since, and even now, I have such an affection for bees, that I cannot, without pain, think of the cruel custom that exists in some countries, of killing them to collect their honey. Ah ! when the hive was full, it was a comfort to them to remove what was superfluous ; but we left them an abundant provision for themselves, until the next flower season ; and we knew, without hurting a single bee, how to remove the comb that exceeded their wants.

In the long vacations at the end of the year, all my duties fulfilled, and all my tastes satisfied, I had still some time to give to society ; and, I confess that that of the young girls became every year more pleasing to me ; but, as I have already said, it was not until the age of fifteen that I felt all its charms. The connections that were formed there did not at all disquiet our families : there was so little inequality of condition and fortune, that the parents were almost as soon agreed as their children ; and, after marriage, love did not often languish : but that which was attended with no danger to my companions might extinguish my emulation, and make the fruit of my studies abortive.

I saw hearts choosing and forming ties with each other. Example inspired me with a similar inclination. One of our young companions, and the prettiest, to my taste, appeared to me still disengaged, and, like me, to have only the vague desire of pleasing. In her freshness, she had not that soft and melting glow by which beauty is painted, when it is compared to the rose ; but the lively red, the down, and roundness of the peach, afford you an image that very much resembles her. As for wit, with so sweet a mouth, could she be without it ? Her eyes and her smile would alone have given wit and grace to her simplest language ; and, from her lips, good-day, and good-night, seemed to me exquisitely delicate. She might be one or two years older than I, and this inequality of age, that an air of steadiness and prudence rendered still more imposing, intimidated my dawning love : but, by degrees, in trying to please her by my attentions, I perceived they touched her ; and, from the moment I thought I had won her heart, I loved her in good earnest. I made her a plain avowal of it, and she as plainly answered me, that her inclinations were not at variance with mine. " But you well know," said she to me, " that, to be lovers, we must hope one day to be married ; and how can we expect it at our age ? You are scarcely fifteen : and are not you going to pursue your studies ? "—" Yes," said I to her, " such is my determination and the wish of my mother. "—" Well, then ! here will be five years of absence before you can be fixed in life, and I shall be more than twenty, without knowing for what you are destined. "—" Alas ! it is too true," said I to her, " that I know not what will become of me ; but promise me, at least, never to marry without

consulting my mother, nor without asking her whether I have not some hope to offer you." She gave me her promise with a charming smile, and, during the rest of the vacation, we abandoned ourselves to the pleasure of loving each other, with the ingenuousness and the innocence of our age. Our private walks, our most interesting conversations, were passed in imagining for me possibilities of future success or fortune, that might favour our wishes; but, as these sweet illusions succeeded each other like dreams, the one effaced the other, and, after they had delighted us for a moment, we finished by weeping over them, as children weep when a breath overturns the house of cards they have built.

During one of these conversations, and as we were sitting on the slope of the meadow, that bordered the river, an incident happened that had nearly cost me my life. My mother had been told of my attachment to Mademoiselle B\*\*\*. She was sorry for it, and feared lest love might diminish my taste and ardour for study. Her aunts perceived that she was unhappy, and pressed her so much that she could not dissimulate the cause of her sorrow. From that moment, these good women, presaging my ruin, exerted themselves to see who should be most bitter against this young innocent girl, accusing her of coquetry, and finding it criminal in her to be amiable in my eyes; and one day, when my mother was enquiring for me, one of my aunts came into the meadow to look for me, and, finding me *tête-à-tête* with the object of their resentment, she loaded that amiable girl with the most unjust reproaches, without sparing the words indecency and seduction. After this imprudent burst of passion, she quitted us; and left me furious, and my lovely girl disconsolate, almost suffocated with sobbing, and her eyes full of tears. Judge what impression her grief made on my heart! In vain did I ask her pardon, weep at her knees, and intreat her to despise and forget this injury. "I am indeed wretched," exclaimed she; "for they accuse me of having seduced you, and of wishing to unsettle you! Fly me; see me no more: no, I wish never to see you again." At these words she quitted me, and forbade me to follow her.

I returned home, my air wild, my eyes flashing fire, my brain absolutely turned. Fortunately, my father was absent, and my mother was the only witness of my delirium. As she saw me pass, and go up to my chamber, she was frightened at my disorder; she followed me: I had locked the door; she commanded me to open it. "Oh, mother!" said I to her, "in what a situation do you see me! Pardon me! I am desperate; I no longer recognise myself; I am not master of my feelings. Spare me the shame of appearing thus before you." I had beat my head against the wall, and my forehead was wounded with the blows. What a passion is anger! I felt, for the first time, its violence and its transport. My mother, dismayed, pressing me to her bosom, and bathing me with tears, uttered such lamentable cries, that all the women of the house, except one, hastened to us; and she, who dared not appear, and who had just been avowing her fault, was tearing her hair for the grief she had caused. Their desolation, the deluge of tears that I saw showered around me, the tender



and half-fetched sighs that I heard, softened my heart and subdued my anger. But I could scarcely breathe, my blood had swelled all my veins; it was necessary to bleed me. My mother trembled for my life; while I was bleeding, her mother told her, in a whisper, what had passed; for in vain had she asked it of me: *horror! barbarity!* were the only words I could make her understand of my answer; to have told her more would, at that moment, have been too dreadful for me. But when the bleeding had relieved me, and a little calm had changed my fury into grief, I made my mother a faithful and simple recital of my love, of the kind and prudent answer of Mademoiselle B\*\*\*, and of the promise she had the goodness to make me, never to marry without the consent of my mother. "After that," said I, "what a wound for her heart, what torture for mine, was the unjust and cruel reproach she has just suffered for me! Ah! mother, this is an insult that nothing can efface."—"Alas!" said she, weeping, "it is I that have caused it; it is my inquietude about this connection that has disordered the heads of your aunts; if you refuse to pardon them, you must refuse to pardon your mother too." At these words, I threw my arms around her, and pressed her to my heart.

To obey her, I had gone to bed. The effervescence of my blood, though moderated, was not appeased; all my nerves were shaken; and the image of this interesting and unhappy girl, whom I believed disconsolate, was present to my mind, with the features of the most lively and most piercing grief. My mother saw me struck with this idea; and my heart, still more disordered than my brain, kept my blood and my spirits in an agitation that resembled a burning fever. The physician, who knew not its cause, presaged disease, and spoke of preventing it by a second bleeding. "Do you think," said my mother to him, "that this evening will be time enough?" He answered in the affirmative. "Come again this evening then, Sir; till then I will take care of him." My mother, having engaged me to try and sleep a little, left me alone; and a quarter of an hour afterward she returned, accompanied.....by whom? You who have studied nature may easily guess. "Save my son; restore him to me," said she to my young love, as she led her to my bed-side. "This dear boy thinks you are offended; teach him that you are not so; that pardon has been asked you; and that you have pardoned." "Yes," said the charming girl, "I have now only thanks to render to your worthy mother; and there is no unhappiness that the kindness she heaps on me would not make me forget." "Ah! Mademoiselle, it is to me to be grateful for the attentions her love has dictated; it is to me she renders life." My mother made her sit down by my bed-side, and, while I heard and looked at her, a pure and peaceful calm overflowed my soul. She had the kindness too to appear to favour our illusions; and, while she recommended prudence and piety to us both, "who knows," said she, "what Heaven has in reserve for you? Heaven is just; you are both honestly born; and love may even render you still more worthy of being happy."—"These," said Mademoiselle B\*\*\*, "are most consoling words, and best adapted to calm you. For my part, you see that I retain

no anger, no resentment, in my soul. Your aunt, whose quick temper had wounded me, has testified to me her regret; I have just been embracing her; and you, who are so good, will you not embrace her?" "Yes, with all my heart," answered I; and in an instant the good aunt came bathing my bed with her tears. In the evening, the physician found my pulse still rather quick, but perfectly regular.

My father, on his return from a journey he had just been making to Clermont, informed us that it was his intention to take me there, not, as my mother would have wished, to continue my studies, and take my course of philosophy, but to learn trade. "There is enough of study and Latin," said he to her; "it is time to think of giving him some useful employment. I have got a place for him in the house of a rich merchant: the counting-room shall be his school." My mother combatted this resolution with all the force of her affection, her grief, and her tears; but I, perceiving that she afflicted my father, without dissuading him, engaged her to comply. "Let me but once get to Clermont," said I to her, "and I will find means to satisfy you both." Had I followed only the dictates of my new passion, I should have been of my father's opinion; for trade, in a few years, might have put me in a tolerably happy situation. But neither my passion for study, nor the will of my mother, which, while she lived, was ever my supreme law, would suffer me to take counsel of my love. I set out, therefore, with the intention of reserving, morning and evening, an hour and half of my time for the continuance of my studies; and, by assuring the merchant that all the rest of the day should be his, I flattered myself that he would be content. But he would not hear a word of this arrangement, and it became necessary to choose between trade and study. "What, Sir," said I to him, "eight hours a day of assiduous application, in your counting-room, not sufficient for you? What more could you require from a slave?" He answered, that I was at liberty to go and be more free elsewhere. I did not give him an opportunity of repeating it; and instantly took leave of him.

All my riches consisted of two half-crowns, that my father had given me for pocket-money, and some sixpenny pieces that my grandmother had slipped into my hand, as she bade me farewell. But the poverty that threatened me was the least of my cares. In quitting the employment to which my father had destined me, I was acting contrary to his will, and I seemed to be withdrawing myself from his authority: would he pardon me? would he not come to bring me to obedience and to duty? and if even, in his anger, he should abandon me, with what bitterness would he accuse my mother of having contributed to my ruin? The bare idea of the vexation I should cause my mother was a severe punishment to me. My mind agitated, my spirits broken, I entered a church, and betook myself to prayer, the last refuge of the unhappy. There, as by inspiration, a thought struck me, that suddenly changed the prospect of my life, and my dream of the future.

Reconciled to myself, and hoping to be so with my father, by the sanctity of the offer I was about to make to him, I began by

assuring myself a bed, and I hired a little garret near the college, the furniture of which consisted in a bed, a table, and a chair; the whole for five-pence a week; not being in a situation to make a longer agreement. To this furniture, I added a hermit's vessel, and made my provision of bread, water, and plums.

After I was settled, and had made, in the evening, a frugal supper at home, I went to bed; I slept but little, and the next day I wrote two letters, one to my mother, in which I exposed to her the cruel refusal I had experienced from the inflexible merchant; the other to my father, in which, assuming the language of religion and nature, I entreated him, with tears, not to oppose the resolution that inspired me of consecrating myself to the church. The sentiment I thought I felt, for that saintly vocation, was, indeed, so sincere, and my faith in the designs and cares of Providence was then so lively, that, in my letter to my father, I announced the almost certain hope of being no longer any expense to him: and, to continue my studies, I only asked of him his consent and his blessing.

My letter was a text for the eloquence of my mother. She thought she saw my route traced out by angels, and beaming with light, like the ladder of Jacob. My father, with less weakness, had not less piety. He suffered himself to be persuaded; and he permitted my mother to write me word that he consented to my holy resolutions. At the same time she sent me a small supply of money, of which I made little use; and which I was soon in a situation to return to her, just as I had received it.

I had learned that, at the college at Clermont, which was much more respectable than that of Mauriac, the masters were aided by private tutors: it was on this employment that I founded my existence: but, to be admitted to it, it was necessary, as soon as possible, to create myself a name in the college, and to gain, in spite of my youth, the confidence of the masters.

I had forgotten to say that, when the vacation commenced at Mauriac, I had gone there to take the attestation of my rhetoric master: he had given it me as complete as he could; and, after having embraced and tenderly thanked him, I was going away with tearful eyes, when I met, in the corridor, the head master, that had so harshly treated me. "Ah! are you there, Sir!" said he; "where do you come from?" "I come, father, from a visit to father Balme; I have been to take leave of him." "He has surely given you a favourable attestation." "Yes, father, very favourable; and I am very grateful for it." "You don't ask me for mine; you think you shall not want it." "Alas! father, I should be very happy to obtain it; but I dare not hope for that favour." "Come into my chamber," said he; "I will convince you that you have not known me." I went in. He seated himself at his table; and, after having written an attestation more extravagant in praises than that of my master, "Read," said he, as he presented it to me, before he sealed it; "if you be not satisfied with it, I will give you one more ample." As I read it, I felt myself overwhelmed with confusion. I was, before father Bis, like Cinna before Augustus. All the odious names I had given him

presented themselves to my mind, as so many injuries with which I had blackened him; and, the more magnanimity he shewed, the more was I confused and humbled before him: at length, as my eyes, full of tears, dared to raise themselves to his, I perceived that my repentance touched him: "Do you then pardon me, father?" said I, with transport; and I threw myself into his arms. I well know that scenes, which to us are personal, have a private interest, which we only can feel; but, if I am not deceived, this would have been affecting even to the indifferent.

Furnished with these attestations, I had only to present them to the head master of the college at Clermont: that would have been sufficient to admit me into the class of philosophy, instantly, and without examination: but this was not what I wanted. Verbal praise, however exaggerated, makes but a vague impression; and I wanted something more striking, more intimate; I wanted to be examined.

I addressed myself to the head master, and, without saying where I came from, I asked him permission to enter the class of philosophy. "Where do you come from?" demanded he. "From Bort, father." "And where have you studied?" Here I suffered myself to use some evasion. "I have been studying," said I, "with a country curate." A sign of disdain was visible on his brows and lips; and, opening a book of exercises, he proposed to me one, in which there was no difficulty. I did it with a stroke of the pen, and with some elegance. "And you," said he, on reading it, "have had a country curate for your master!" "Yes, father." "This evening you shall translate." It chanced to be part of an oration of Cicero, that I had seen when in rhetoric; I therefore translated it without difficulty, and as quick as I had done the exercise. "And is it, indeed," said he, on reading my translation, "at a country curate's that you have studied?" "You must plainly perceive it," said I. "That I may see it better, to-morrow you shall compose a theme." In this prolonged examination, I thought I discovered a curiosity that was favourable to me. The subject he proposed to me was not less encouraging: it was the regret and parting of a boy that leaves his parents for school. What more analogous to my situation and to the affections of my soul! I would I could recollect the expression I gave to the feelings of the son and the mother. Those words, dictated by nature, and whose eloquent simplicity art can never imitate, were watered with my tears; and the master perceived it. But what most astonished him (for there truth itself resembled invention) was the passage where, rising above myself, I made the youth address his father, and tell him of the courage he felt to become, one day, by force of application and study, the consolation, the support, and honour of his old age; and of restoring, to his other children, what his education had cost. "And you have studied at a country curate's!" exclaimed the Jesuit, still more loudly. For this time I was silent, and cast down my eyes. "And verses?" resumed he, "has your country curate taught you to make them too?" I answered that I had some notion of it, but very little habit. "That is what I should be glad to know," said

he, smiling. "Come this evening before the lecture hour." The subject of the verses was, *What is the difference between feigning and lying?* This was precisely an excuse that he, perhaps, intentionally offered me.

I studied to represent feigning as a pure joke, or an innocent artifice: an ingenious art of amusing, in order to instruct; sometimes, even a sublime art, to embellish truth herself, to render her more amiable, more touching, more attracting, by lending her a thin transparent veil, covered with flowers. In lying, it was easy for me to shew the baseness of the mind that betrayed its feeling or its judgment; and the impudence of the crafty knave, that perverts and disfigures truth, in order to impose, and whose language bears the character of trick, malice, fraud, and dishonour.

"Now, tell me," said the adroit Jesuit, "whether you lied or feigned, when you told me that a country curate had been your master; for I am almost certain that you have studied with us at Mauriac." "Though both be true, father," said I, "I confess that I should have told a lie, if my intention had been to deceive you; but, in deferring to tell you what you at present know, I had no desire of disguising the truth, or of leaving you in error. I wanted to be known to you, better than by attestations: I had good ones to produce to you; and here they are. On these testimonies, and without examination, you would have granted me my first request; and I had one to make you, much more essential to me. While I study, I must teach; and you must have the kindness to give me a living, by giving me scholars. My parents are poor, and their children numerous; I have already cost them too much; I will no longer be a burden to them; and, till I shall be able to succour them, I ask of you what every man in misfortune may ask without blushing, employment and bread." "Ah, child!" said he, "at your age, have you the means of commanding attention, obedience, and respect, among your equals? You are scarcely fifteen." "True; but, father, do you reckon misfortune and its influence as nothing? Do you think it does not advance the authority of reason, and the maturity of age? Try me; you will, perhaps, find my character sufficiently grave to make you forget my youth." "I will see," said he; "I will consider of it." "No, father, no consideration is necessary: I intreat you to put me, from this moment, on the list of private tutors at this school, and to furnish me with scholars. It is immaterial to me from what classes; I dare answer for it they shall do their duty, and you shall be satisfied with me." He promised me, but rather feebly; and, with a note from his hand, I went to begin my course of logick.

The next day I thought I perceived that the professor paid some attention to me. The logick of Port-Royal, and the habit of speaking Latin with the country curate, gave me a considerable advantage over my comrades. I hastened to put myself forward, and neglected nothing to make myself remarked. In the mean time, weeks elapsed without my hearing any thing from the head master. Not to appear importunate, I waited. I only, sometimes, placed myself in his way, and bowed to him with a suppliant air,

but he scarcely perceived me ; but it seemed that, having nothing good to communicate, he affected not to see me. I retired very sad ; and, in my garret, that almost touched the clouds, abandoning myself to my reflections, I made my hermit-like supper in tears : fortunately, I had excellent bread.

A good little lady, Madame Clément, who lived under me, and had a kitchen, was curious to know where mine was. One morning she called on me ; “ Sir,” said she, “ I hear you go up to your room at dinner hour, and you are alone, and without fire, and no one comes up after you. Excuse me, but I am unhappy at your situation.” I confessed to her that, for the moment, I was not much at my ease ; but I added that I should shortly have full enough to live on ; that I was capable of keeping a school ; and that the Jesuits would provide for me. “ Ah !” said she, “ these Jesuits ! they have something very different in their heads ! they will lull you with promises, and suffer you to starve. Why don’t you go to Riom, to the Oratorians ? They will give you fewer fine words, but will do more for you than they promise.” I need not tell you that I was speaking to a Jansenist. Touched with the interest she took in me, I appeared disposed to follow her advice, and I requested her to give me some information concerning the Oratorians. “ They are,” said she, “ very honest people, whom the Jesuits detest, and would wish to annihilate. But it is dinner time ; come and partake of my soup, and I will tell you more.” I accepted her invitation ; and, though her dinner was certainly very frugal, I never made a better in my life : above all, two or three small glasses of wine, that she made me drink, revived all my spirits. I there learned, in an hour, all that I wanted to know of the animosity of the Jesuits against the fathers of the Oratory, and of the jealous rivalry of the two colleges. My good neighbour added, that, if I went to Riom, I should be well recommended. I thanked her for the good offices she was willing to render me : and, strong in her intentions and my own hopes, I went to call on the head master. It was a holiday. He appeared surprised at seeing me, and inquired the object of my visit. This reception completely persuaded me of what my neighbour had told me. “ I come, father,” answered I, “ to take leave of you.” “ What ! are you going away ?” “ Yes, father, I am going to Riom, where the fathers of the Oratory will give me, in their college, as many scholars as I desire.” “ What ! my son ! you are going to quit us ! you, educated in our schools, are going to desert us !” “ Alas ! ’tis with regret ; but you can do nothing for me ; and I am assured that those good fathers” ..... “ Those good fathers have but too much the art of seducing and attracting credulous young men like you. But be assured, my son, that they have neither the credit nor the power that we have.” “ Then have the kindness, father, to give me an employment that will maintain me.” “ Yes, I am thinking of it, I am endeavouring to do it, and in the mean time I will provide for your wants.” What do you call providing for my wants, father ? Know that my mother would sooner deprive herself of every thing than suffer a stranger to assist me. But I will no longer receive any aid, even from my

family; it is on the fruit of my labour that I wish to subsist. Put it in my power to do this, or I must seek elsewhere." "No, no, you shall not go," replied he; "I forbid it. Follow me. Your professor esteems you. Let us go to him together." In this way he conducted me to my professor. "Do you know, father," said he to him, "what is going to become of this youth? He is invited to Riom. The Oratorians, those dangerous men, want to make a convert of him. He is going to ruin himself; and we must save him." My professor took fire at this intelligence, even more sensibly than the head master. They both told wonders of me to all the masters of the college: and, from that time, my fortune was made: I had a school; and, in a month, twelve scholars, at three shillings and four-pence a-piece, put me in a situation above all my wants. I was well lodged, well nourished, and at Easter I could clothe myself decently in the dress of an abbé, which was what I most desired, both for the purpose of better assuring my father of the sincerity of my vocation, and of having an assured existence in the college.

When I quitted my garret, the good lady, my neighbour, to whom I told what had been done, was not so pleased at it as I could have wished. "Ah!" said she, "I should have been much happier to have seen you go to Riom. 'Tis there they make good and saintly studies." I begged her to preserve her kindness for me, in case my hopes should be frustrated; and, in my opulence, I went occasionally to see her.

My ecclesiastical habit, the decorum it imposed, and, still more, the old desire of personal consideration, which the example of Amalvy had left in my soul, were productive of happy effects; and particularly of rendering me difficult and reserved in my school acquaintances. I was not hasty in the choice of my friends; and I cultivated but a small number: we were four, and always the same in our parties of pleasure; that is to say, our walks. At our common expense, which was small, we subscribed for our reading at an old bookseller's; and as good books, thank heaven, are the most common, we read only excellent ones. The great orators, the great poets, the best writers of the last century, some of the present, (for of these the bookseller had but few), succeeded from hand to hand; and, in our walks, each recalling what he had collected, almost all our conversations passed in remarks on our reading. In one of our walks to Beauregard, the country-house of the bishoprick, we had the happiness to visit the venerable Massillon. The reception this illustrious old man gave us was so full of kindness, his presence and the accent of his voice made so lively and tender an impression on me, that the recollection of it is one of the most grateful that I retain of what passed in my early years.

At that age, when the affections of the mind and soul have, reciprocally, so sudden a communication, when reason and sentiment act and re-act on each other with so much rapidity, there is no one to whom it has not sometimes happened, on seeing a great man, to imprint on his forehead the features that distinguish the character of his soul and his genius. It was thus that, among the

wrinkles of that countenance already decayed, and in those eyes that were soon to be extinguished, I thought I could still trace the expression of that eloquence, so sensible, so soft, so sublime, so profoundly penetrating, with which I had just been enchanted in his writings. He permitted us to mention them to him, and to offer him the homage of the religious tears they had made us shed.

After the course of logic was completed, after a year of excessive labour, having had, without reckoning my own studies, scholars from three different classes to instruct, morning and evening, I went home to my parents to take a little repose: and, I confess, it was not without some sentiment of pride that I appeared before my father, well dressed, my hands full of little presents for my sisters, and with some money in reserve. My mother wept with joy, as she embraced me. My father received me with kindness, though coldly. All the rest of the family were enchanted at my presence.

The joy of Mademoiselle B\*\*\* was not so pure; and I myself was very much confused and embarrassed when I had to appear before her in the dress of an abbé. In this change, it is true, I was not faithless to her, but I was inconstant; this was indeed enough; I knew not how to behave. I consulted my mother on this delicate point. My dear, said she, she has a right to shew you her vexation, her anger, and even something more poignant, coldness and disdain. You must bear all; you must, on all occasions, shew her the tenderest esteem, and treat with infinite attention a heart you have wounded.

Mademoiselle B\*\*\* was gentle, indulgent, and polite, but reserved and shy; she carefully avoided any private conversation with me. Thus, in company, we treated each other with that kind of attention, which gave no intimation of our having once been lovers.

The second year that I studied philosophy was still more laborious to me than the first. My school was increased: I paid every attention to it; and, beside having to dispute publicly on general questions, it was necessary to abridge my sleep very much, in order to prepare for them.

On the very day that I finished my course of philosophy, by this public exercise, I was informed of the fatal event that plunged myself and my family in an abyss of grief.

After my disputation was over, my friends and I, according to the established custom, were partaking of a collation in the professor's room, that should have rendered us joyful; but in the felicitations that were addressed to me, I observed only sadness. As I had solved the difficulties that had been proposed to me tolerably well, I was surprised that my companions and even the professor himself did not appear more pleased. "Ah! if I had done well," said I to them, "you would not be all so sad." "Alas!" said the professor, "the sadness that surprises you is most deep and sincere; and would to heaven it had no other source than the brilliant success that you have experienced! I have a much more cruel misfortune to announce to you. You have no longer a father!"



I fell under the blow, and was a quarter of an hour pale and speechless. Restored to life and tears, I would have set off instantly, to go and offer consolation to my poor mother. But, without a guide, and on mountainous roads, night would surprise me; I was obliged to wait till day-light. I had twelve long leagues to go on a hired horse; and, though I spurred him as much as possible, I proceeded very slowly. During this melancholy journey, one single thought, one single picture was present to my mind, and occupied it without ceasing: all the energies of my soul were united to sustain its impression: and soon all my courage must be collected to see it in reality, and to contemplate it in all its mournful horrors.

In the middle of the night I arrive at my mother's door; I knock; I announce myself, and instantly my ears are assailed by a plaintive murmur and a confusion of accents of distress. All the family get up, the door is opened; and, on entering, I am encircled by my weeping friends; mother, children, old helpless women, all almost naked, their hair dishevelled, resembling spectres, and extending their arms to me with cries that pierce and rend my heart. I know not what force, a force that nature surely reserves for extreme misery, suddenly displayed itself within me. I never felt so superior to myself. I had to lift an enormous weight of grief; I did not sink under it. I opened my arms, my bosom, to these wretched creatures; I, who weep so easily, received them all with the assurance of a man inspired by heaven; and, without manifesting weakness, without shedding a tear, "Mother, brothers, sisters, we experience," said I to them, "the greatest of afflictions; let it not overcome us. Children, you lose a father, and you find one; I am he, I will be a father to you; I embrace all his duties; you are no longer orphans." At these words, rivers of tears, but tears much less bitter, flowed from their eyes. "Ah!" cried my mother, as she pressed me to her heart, "my boy! my dear boy! I knew you well!" and my brothers, my sisters, my good aunts, my grandmother, fell on their knees. This touching scene would have lasted through the night, had I been able to support it. I was faint with fatigue; I asked for a bed. "Alas!" said my mother, "there is no other in the house than that of....." Her tears stifled her voice. "Well! give me that, I will lie in it without reluctance." I did lie there, but I did not sleep; my nerves were too much shaken. The whole night long I saw the image of my father, as vividly, as strongly impressed upon my soul, as if he had been present. I sometimes thought I really beheld him: it did not alarm me. I extended my arms to him; I spoke to him. "Ah! why is it not real?" said I to him. "Why are you not what I seem to see? Why can you not answer me, and at least tell me, whether you are satisfied with me?" After this long watching, and this painful disorder of the fancy, that was no dream, it was grateful to me to see day-light. My mother, who had not slept any more than myself, thought to wait for my waking. At the first noise she heard me make, she came; and was frightened at the revolution which had taken place in me: my skin seemed to have been dyed in saffron.

The physician, that she called in, told her, that ~~this~~ <sup>that</sup> was an effect of great concentrated grief, and that mine might be attended with the most fatal consequences, if it were not removed by some diversion. "A journey, absence, and that as soon as possible, is," said he, "the best remedy that I can advise. But do not propose it to him as a diversion, to which great grief is ever averse: it must be ignorant of the care employed to divert it; it must be deceived in order to be cured." The old curate, that had given me lessons during the vacations, had a small parsonage house in the centre of his diocese. He kindly offered to take me thither, and to keep me there till my health should be restored. It was necessary to give a motive to this journey: the intention I had of taking the tonsure from the hands of my bishop, before I proceeded farther, furnished this motive: for one of my hopes was the happy chance of a simple benefice that I proposed to myself to try and obtain.

"I mean," said my mother to me, "to employ this year in arranging and regulating the affairs of the family. And do you, my dear, hasten to enter the career that God calls you to: make yourself known to our holy bishop, and ask counsel of him."

The physician was right: there are griefs still more engaging than pleasure itself. Never, in the happiest times, when the paternal roof was so grateful and smiling to me, did I quit it, with so much pain, as when it was in mourning. Of six guineas, that I had saved, my mother permitted me to leave three in the family; and, still rich enough, I set off, with my old friend, for his curacy at Saint-Bonet.

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## BOOK II.

THE tranquillity, the silence, of the hamlet of Abloville, where I am writing these memoirs, recal to my mind the calm that the village of Saint-Bonet restored to my soul. It did not offer so cheerful nor so fertile a landscape: the cherry-tree and the apple-tree did not there shade the ripe corn with loaded branches; but nature had there too her ornaments, and her abundance. The vine-arbour formed her porticos, the orchard her saloons, and the green grass her carpets; the cock had there his court of love, the hen her young family; the chesnut-tree majestically displayed its shade, and spread its gifts; the fields, the meadows, the woods, the flocks, cultivation, pond-fishing, the grand elements of country scenery, were there sufficiently interesting to occupy an idle mind. Mine, after the long fatigue of my studies, and that cruel blow, the death of my father, had need of repose.

The curate had some books analogous to his profession; a profession that was soon to be mine. I designed myself for the pul-

pit : to that he directed my reading : the Holy Scriptures were begun, and, in the fathers of the church, he shewed me good examples of evangelic eloquence. The spirits of this old man, naturally gay, were only just as much so with me as was necessary to efface, every day, some tint of my sombre melancholy. Insensibly it subsided, and I became accessible to joy. It was joy that, twice a month, presided with friendship, when the curates of the neighbourhood used to meet together, to dinners, which they gave each other in turn. Admitted to these festive tables, it was there that emulation inspired me with a taste for our poetry. Almost all these curates wrote French verses, and used to emulate each other in writing little pieces, the gaiety, naturalness and pleasantry of which pleased me exceedingly. To imitate them, I made some attempts, which they deigned to smile on. Happy society of poets, where no one was envious nor captious, and where each was content with himself and his companions, as if they had been so many Horaces and Anacreons !

This leisure was not the end of my journey, and I did not forget that I had approached Limoges, in order to go thither and take the *tonsure* ; but the bishop gave it formally only once a year, and the moment was passed. It was necessary either to wait, or to solicit a particular favour. I preferred to submit myself to the common rule : and for this reason. The ceremony was every year preceded by a short residence with the Sulpicians, who were supposed to observe the characters, dispositions, qualities, and talents of the candidates, in order to render an account of them to the bishop. I wanted to be recommended, and for that purpose to be perceived, known, and distinguished from the crowd. Inventive necessity induced me to seize that opportunity of making myself known to the Sulpicians and to the bishop : but to wait six months, and continue with my poor curate, would have been too burdensome to him. Fortunately a nobleman, of an excellent disposition, his friend and neighbour, the marquis of Linars, sent his chaplain to express to me his extreme desire that I should dedicate this interval of time to one of his sons, a young knight of the order of Malta, a charming youth, whose education had hitherto been neglected. I procured the curate's consent, and accepted the proposal. Nothing can exceed the marks of kindness and esteem with which I was honoured in this distinguished house, which was frequented by all the nobility of the country. The marchioness herself, daughter of the duke of Montemart, educated at Paris, and rather of a lofty character, was always kind and gentle to me ; because I behaved with simplicity and decorum, and was respectful without affectation ; a character that has always set me at my ease in society, and never gave offence.

When the time came for taking the *tonsure*, I went to the seminary, where I found myself under the eyes of three Sulpicians, with twelve other candidates like myself. The reserve of meditation, the silence that reigned among us, and the exercises of piety that occupied us, appeared to me at first but little favourable to my views ; but, while I was despairing of being able to make myself known, an opportunity offered itself without my

seeking it. We had, twice a day, an hour of recreation in a little garden, planted with rows of lime-trees. My companions amused themselves there by playing at *le petit palet*; and I, who did not like the game, walked by myself. One day, one of our directors came up to me, and inquired why I was thus alone, preferring solitude to the society of the other candidates. I answered that I was the oldest, and that, at my age, I was naturally glad to have a few moments to myself, in order to collect, class, and arrange my ideas; that I was fond of reflecting on my studies and what I had read, and that, having the misfortune to want memory, I could only supply it by the force of meditation. This answer engaged conversation. The Sulpician was desirous of knowing where I had been educated, what questions I had maintained in my public disputations, and for what species of reading I felt most inclination. I answered all this. You may conceive that a director of the seminary at Limoges did not expect to find, in a boy of eighteen, any great fund of knowledge, and that my small store must have appeared to him a little treasure.

I was fully satisfied with the success of my little *début*, when, in the evening, at the walking hour, instead of one Sulpician, I was accosted by two. It was there that the fruit of my reading at Clermont acquired a real value. I had said that my prevailing taste was oratory, and had rapidly named those of our Christian orators that I most admired. They kept me to this subject. I had to analyze the authors I spoke of, to mark, distinctly, their different characters, to quote from each the passages that had most struck me with astonishment, filled me with emotion, or delighted me by the brilliancy and the charm of eloquence. The two men of whom I spoke with the most enthusiasm were, Bourdaloue and Massillon: but I had not time to explain myself. It was not until the next day that I could dilate on their praises. I had all their plans in my head: the extracts I had made from their sermons were present to me; their exordiums, their divisions, their most beautiful traits, even to their texts, recurred to me in multitudes. I may indeed say that on that day my memory did me good service: instead of the two Sulpicians of the preceding evening, I had now three for my auditors; and all three, after having listened to me in silence, left me with astonishment. The rest of our conversations (for they quitted me no more during the hours of recreation) fell more vaguely on the most beautiful funeral orations of Bossuet and Fléchier, on some sermons of La Rue, and on the small collection of those of Cheminais, that I knew almost by heart. Afterward, I know not how, poetry became our subject. I acknowledged that I had read some of our poets, and I named the great Corneille. "And the tender Racine," asked one of the Sulpicians, "have you read him?" "Yes, I confess I have," said I; "but Massillon had read him before me, and from him he learnt to speak to the heart with so much feeling and passion. And do you think," asked I, "that Fenelon, the author of *Telemachus*, had not read again and again the loves of Dido in the *Æneid*?" This question introduced classical literature; and these gentlemen, who knew not how much, thanks to

my misfortunes, I was imbued with ancient latinity, were surprised to see how full I was of it. You may easily believe that I gave myself all the pleasure of displaying it. I was inexhaustible. Verse and prose flowed as from their first source, and I had the air of not citing more, for fear of wearying them.

I finished by a specimen of the fresh erudition I had amassed at Saint Bonet. The books of Moses and Solomon presently passed in review. I was at the holy father's when the day arrived for receiving the *tonsure*. On that day, then, after our initiation in the holy profession, we went, conducted by our three directors, to pay our respects to the bishop. He received us all with equal kindness, but, just as I was retiring with my companions, he called me back. My heart bounded. "You, Sir," said he to me, are not unknown to me: your mother has recommended you to me. She is a most worthy woman, and I esteem her highly. Where do you propose to finish your studies?" I answered, that I was not determined; that I had just had the misfortune to lose my father; that my family, numerous and poor, expected all from me; and that I should endeavour to find some university that would procure me, during the course of my studies, the means of existing, and of contributing to the support of my mother and our children. "Your children!" replied he, moved at this expression. "Yes, my Lord, I am to them a second father, and, if I do not sink under the exertion, I promise myself to fulfil his duties." "Well," said he, "the archbishop of Bourges, one of our most worthy prelates, is my friend; I can recommend you to him; and if, as I expect, he attends to my recommendation, you will have nothing more to do for yourself and your family but to merit his protection, by using well the talents heaven has granted you." I returned thanks to the bishop for his good intentions; but I asked time to inform and consult my mother, not doubting but that she would be as sensible to them as myself.

The good curate, of whom I went to take leave, was transported with joy on learning what he called an act of heaven in my favour. What would he have said, could he have foreseen that this archbishop of Bourges was soon to be chaplain to the king, and minister of the royal benefices, and that the eloquence of the pulpit, to which I intended to devote myself, was to have, under this ministry, the most interesting opportunities of signalizing itself at court? It is true, that for a young ecclesiastic, who should have united talents to ambition, a charming career was open before me. A vain delicacy, a still vainer illusion, prevented me from entering it. I have had occasion to admire, more than once, how the woof of our destiny ties and unties itself, and of how many unconnected and tender threads its web is composed.

On my return to Linars, I wrote to inform my mother that I had taken the *tonsure*, under favourable auspices; that I had received, from the bishop, the most touching marks of kindness; and that, as soon as possible, I would go and communicate them to her. On the same day I received an express from her with a letter, nearly effaced by her tears. "Is it, indeed, true," asked she, "that you have had the madness to enlist in the company of

the Count of Linars, the marquis's brother, and captain of the Enghien regiment? If you have had this misfortune, let me know it; I will sell all the little that I have, in order to ransom my son. Oh God! was this the son you had given me?"

Judge of the despair into which I fell, on reading this letter. Mine had made a circuit to arrive at Bort: it would yet be two days before my mother received it, and I saw her disconsolate. I instantly wrote her word, that what she had been told was a horrible falsehood; that so culpable a folly had never entered my thoughts; that my heart was rent with the vexation she felt; that I begged her pardon for being its innocent cause; but that she ought to have known me well enough to reject so absurd a calumny; and that I would very soon come and convince her that my conduct was neither that of a libertine nor a madman. The express set off again immediately. But, so long as I could count the hours that would elapse before my mother would be undeceived, I continued in torture.

As far as I can recollect, Linars was sixteen leagues from Bort, and though I had conjured the express to travel all night, how could I think that he would not take some rest? I could get none, and I had not ceased to bathe my bed with my tears, in thinking of those my mother was shedding for me, when I heard a noise of horses in the court. I got up. It was the count of Linars who arrived. Without giving myself time to dress, I hastened to meet him; but he prevented me, and coming to me with an air of great affliction..... "Ah! Sir," said he, "how culpable must a foolish imprudence render me in your eyes, that has spread desolation in your family, and an affliction in the heart of your mother that I could not calm! She believes you are enlisted with me. All in tears, she has been throwing herself at my feet, and offering me her gold cross, her ring, her purse, and all she had in the world, to obtain your discharge. In vain did I assure her that this engagement did not exist; my protestations were vain; she only considered them as a refusal to restore you to her. She is still in tears. Set off immediately; go and revive her."—"And who, Sir," said I, "can have given birth to this fatal report?"—"I, Sir," said he; "it wounds me to the heart; I beg your pardon for it. The necessity of raising new recruits led me to your town. I there found some young men, school-fellows of yours, who were inclined to enlist, but who still hesitated. I saw that there wanted only your example to decide them. I yielded to the temptation of telling them that they would have you for their comrade; that I had enlisted you; and the report of it spread."—"Ah! Sir," exclaimed I with indignation, "is it possible that such a falsehood could escape from the mouth of a man like you!" "Do not spare me," said he, "I merit the bitterest reproaches; but this trick, the consequence of which I so little felt, has made me acquainted with such natural maternal love as I had never before seen. Go and console your mother; she has need of you."

The marquis of Linars, to whom his brother avowed his fault and all the ill he had done, furnished me with a horse and a guide, and on the following day I set off; but I set off in a fever; for my

blood was on fire; and, in the evening, a paroxysm seized me, at the moment when my guide discovered that, by taking cross-roads, he had lost his way. I trembled on my horse, and night was closing upon us, in a bleak and desolate country, when I saw a man cross the road. I called to him to know where I was, and whether we were far from the village to which my guide thought we were going. "You are more than three leagues from it," said he, "and you are not in the road." But, as he answered, he recognized me: it was a young man from Bort. "Ah, is it you?" said he, calling me by my name; "by what accident do I find you at this hour on this heath? You look ill! where are you going to sleep?"—"And where are you going?" said I.—"I" answered he, "I am going to see my uncle, who lives in a village not far off."—"And do you think," added I, "that your uncle would take care of me for the night? for I very much want rest."—"At his house," said he, "you will be but ill accommodated, but I will insure you a hearty welcome." He took me there, and I found bread and milk for my guide, hay for my horse, and for myself a good bed of clean straw, and some toast and water for my supper. I wanted nothing more, for the fever fit was still on me, and tolerably severe. When I awoke the next morning (for I had slept some hours) I learnt that this village was a parish. It was the day of the assumption, and, though very ill, I would go to mass. A young abbé in this church was an object of attention. The curate perceived me, and, after service, invited me into the vestry. "Is it possible," said he, after having learnt my adventure, "that, in a village where I am, an ecclesiastic should have slept on straw?" He took me home with him, and never was hospitality more cordially nor more nobly exerted. I was enfeebled by the diet and fatigue of my journey: he was desirous of re-establishing me; and, persuaded that my fever was only in the blood, he affirmed that it should be plentifully diluted by mild and refreshing drink. He was not mistaken. He made me dine with him. Never did I eat so excellent a soup. It was his niece that made it. His niece, then eighteen, resembled the virgins of Coreggio or Raphael. I never saw a countenance with more sweetness nor more charms. She was my nurse whilst the curate was doing the evening duty at church; and, ill as I was, I was not insensible to her cares. "My uncle," said she, "will not suffer you to go away in the state you now are: he says Bort is six long leagues from hence: you must recover your strength before you set off. And why be in such a hurry? Are you not very well with us? You shall have a good bed; I'll make it myself. I'll bring you your soups, or, if you prefer it, some warm milk from a goat, that I milk with my own hands; you came hither very pale, and we are determined to send you away as fresh as a rose."—"Ah! Mademoiselle," said I, "I should be very happy to wait the recovery of my health with you; but if you knew what pain my mother suffers for me; how impatient she is to see me; and how impatient too I must be to find myself in her arms!"—"The more you love her, the more she loves you, and the more ought you," replied she, "to spare her the grief of

seeing you in this state. A sister has more courage: and I am here as a sister to you."—"It should indeed seem so," said I; "by the tender interest you are kind enough to take in me."—"You certainly interest us," said she, "and that's very natural: my uncle and I have compassionate hearts for every body; and we very rarely see such sufferers as you." The curate returned from his church. He required of me that I should send back my horse and my guide, and insisted on taking upon himself the care of having me conducted home.

In a more tranquil state of mind, I should have felt myself enchanted at this parsonage, like Rinaldo in the palace of Armida; for my simple Marcelline was an Armida to me; and the more innocent she was, the more I found her dangerous. But, though my mother must have been undeceived by my two letters, nothing could have kept me from her beyond the day on which, the access of fever being more feeble, and my strength improved by two nights of tolerably good sleep, I was able to mount on horseback.

My sister (this was the name that Marcelline had given herself, and that I, too, gave her when we were alone) did not see me at the moment of my departure without a violent emotion of the heart that she could not dissemble. "Good bye, Mr. Abbé," said she to me, before her uncle; "take care of your health; do not forget us; and embrace your mother very tenderly for me; tell her I love her dearly." At these words her eyes moistened, and, as she retired to conceal from us her tears, "You see," said the curate to me, "the name of mother affects her: for it is not long since she lost her own. Good bye, Sir; like Marcelline, I beg you not to forget us; we shall often talk of you."

I found my mother entirely recovered from the fears she had felt, but, on seeing me, she was alarmed for my health. I calmed her inquietude; and indeed I felt myself much better, thanks to the diet the good curate had prescribed. We both wrote to thank him for his hospitable kindness; and, in returning him his mare, on which I had come, we accompanied our letters with some modest presents, among which my mother slipped in a simple ornament for Marcelline, which, though of little value, was elegant and tasteful. After which, as I visibly recovered my health, we both occupied ourselves with the regulation of our affairs.

The bishop's protection, his recommendation, the prospect that it offered me, appeared to my mother to be all that fortune could grant me: and I then thought like her. My star (and I now say my happy star) made me change my opinion. This incident obliges me to recur to what is passed.

I have reason to think that, from my examination by the head-master at Clermont, the Jesuits had cast their eyes on me. Two of my fellow-students, and the most distinguished, were already caught in their nets. It was possible that they would wish to entice me; and a somewhat curious fact, that I well remember, persuades me that they at least thought of it.

In the little leisure I had at Clermont, I had amused myself with drawing; and, as I had a taste for it, I was supposed to excel. My eye was accurate, and my hand sure; nothing more was



requisite for the object that induced the rector of the monastery to send for me. "I am assured," said he to me, "that you amuse yourself with architectural designs, and I have chosen you to make me a plan of our college; examine the edifice well, and after having traced the ground plan, draw its elevation. Do it with the utmost care, because it will be submitted to the inspection of the king." Proud of this commission, I hastened to execute it; and, as you may conceive, I gave it the most scrupulous attention. But, desirous of doing it too well, I did it very ill. One of the wings of the building had a first floor, the other wing had none. I found this inequality shocking, and I corrected it by making them equal. "Ah! what have you done here?" said the rector.—"I have made the building regular, father," said I.—"And that is precisely what you should not have done. This plan is intended to shew the contrary: first, to the father confessor, and by his mediation, to the minister, and to the king himself. For we want to obtain a grant from the crown to build the floor that one of the wings wants. I hastened away to correct my mistake; and when the rector was satisfied: "Will you permit me, father," said I, "to make one observation? This college they have built you is handsome, but there is no church to it. You are obliged to say mass in a low room. Has the church been forgotten in the plan?" The Jesuit smiled at my simplicity. "Your observation," said he, "is very just; but you may have remarked too that we have no garden."—"That too has surprised me."—"Be not unhappy about either; we shall have both."—"How! father; I see no room."—"What! you don't see, on the other side of the wall that encloses our college, the church of the Augustines, and that garden in their convent?"—"Yes, but"..... "Well! that garden and that church will be ours; and it is Providence that seems to have placed them so near us."—"But, father, the Augustines will then have neither church nor garden?"—"On the contrary, they will have a much more beautiful church, and a much more extensive garden: God forbid that we should make them suffer! in removing them we shall take care to recompense them."—"Ah! you are going to remove the Augustines?"—"Yes, my son; and their house will be an infirmary for our old members; for we must have a house for the retreat of our aged."—"Nothing is surely more just; but I was thinking where you will put the Augustines."—"Let that give you no uneasiness. They are to have the convent, the church, and the garden of the Cordeliers. Will they not be much more comfortable, and much better than where they now are?"—"Very well! but what will become of the Cordeliers?"—"I expected this objection, and it is but just that I should answer it: Clermont and Mont-Ferrand were formerly two towns; they now form but one, and Mont-Ferrand is only a suburb of Clermont; thus we usually say Clermont-Ferrand. Now, you know that the Cordeliers have a superb convent at Mont-Ferrand, and you will readily conceive that it is not necessary for one town to have two convents of Cordeliers. Therefore, in removing those at Clermont to Mont-Ferrand, no one is injured; and so you see, we, without harming any one, shall be

possessors of the church, the garden, and convent of these good Augustines, who will be grateful to us for the exchange; for we must ever act as good neighbours. What I am thus confiding to you is still a secret in our society, but you are not a stranger to it; and from this time I am pleased to consider you as one of us."

Such, as nearly as I can recollect, was this dialogue, in which Blaise Pascal would have found food for ridicule, and which appeared to me so sincere and so simple. What I now infer from it is, that it was not without premeditated design that the professor of rhetoric at Clermont, father Noaillac, in passing through Bort, on his road to Toulouse, came and invited himself to dine with me.

My god-mother, who no more suspected his mission than I did, received him in the best manner she could, and during dinner he gratified her by exaggerating my success in the art of teaching. According to him, my scholars were distinguished in their classes, and it was easy, on reading their exercises, to recognise those I had instructed. I found in this flattery an excess of politeness, but I did not see its aim. Towards the end of the dinner, my mother, according to the custom of the country, left us alone at table, and my Jesuit was then at his ease. "At present," said he to me, "let us talk of our projects. What do you intend to do with yourself? and what road do you mean to take?" I confided to him the advances that the bishop had made me, and the intention my mother and I had of profiting by them. He listened to me with a pensive and disdainful air. "I know not," said he at last, "what you can find flattering and seducing in these offers. For my part, I see in them nothing that is worthy of you. First of all, the title of doctor of Bourges is so decried, that it is become ridiculous, and, instead of graduating there, you will degrade yourself. Besides.....but that is a point too delicate to be touched on. There are truths that can only be told to intimate friends, and I have no right to explain myself more freely with you." This discreet reserve had the effect he expected. "Pray explain yourself, father," said I; "and be assured I shall be grateful to you for having spoken to me with an open heart."—"So be it, since it is your wish; and indeed I feel that, in a moment so critical, I should be wrong to conceal from you what I think of a plan in which I see nothing assured to you but disgust."—"And what disgust?" asked I with surprise.—"Your bishop," continued he, "is one of the best men in the world; his intentions are pure, and he wishes you well. I am persuaded of it. But what good does he think of doing you, by placing you under the dependence and at the mercy of this archbishop of Bourges? During your five years of theology, you will be his pensioner, and will live by his bounty; I am willing to suppose, too, that he will aid your family with some charitable donations (these words froze my blood); but are you and your mother made to be on the list of his charities? Are you reduced to that?" "Certainly not," cried I.—"And yet this it is, and perhaps for a long time, that they propose to you; this is all they induce you to hope."—"It seems to me," said I, "that the church has property, the dispensation

of which is committed to the bishops; property of which they have no right to possess themselves, but to dispose of it to others; and this property, these benefices, I thought I could partake of without blushing." "That is indeed the bait," said he, "with which they excite the ambition of young men. But when, and at what price, do they obtain the benefits they expect? You know not the spirit of domination and of empire that these slow and tardy benefactors exercise over those they protect. They fear lest they should escape; and prolong as much as they can the state of dependence and slavery in which they keep these unhappy expectants. They give easily and liberally to favour and to birth; but if unhappy merit ever obtains any grace, it is very dearly bought!" "You shew me," said I, "an abundance of thorns and briars, where I saw only flowers. But in my situation, burthened with a family that I must maintain, and that wants my support, what do you advise me to do?" "I advise you," said he, "to put yourself in a position to protect yourself, and not to be protected. I know a profession in which every man that distinguishes himself has credit and powerful friends. That profession is mine. All the avenues of fortune and ambition are interdicted to us personally; but they are all open to the society as a body." "You advise me then to become a Jesuit?" "Yes, certainly: and, by means that are known to us, your mother will soon be in comfort, her children brought up, the state itself will take care of them, and, when the time comes for providing for them, there are no facilities that our connections do not afford us. It is for this reason that the flower of the youth of our colleges are ambitious of, and solicit the advantage of, being received into this powerful society; it is for this reason that the chiefs of the greatest houses desire to be affiliated to it."—"I have considered your society," said I, "as a source of knowledge; and, for a man who is desirous of instructing himself and of developing his talents, I have said to myself, a hundred times, that he could not do better than live among you. But, in your regulations, two things disgust me: the length of the noviciate, and the obligation of beginning by teaching the lower classes." "As for the noviciate," said he, "two years of probation must be submitted to; the law is invariable. But as to the lower classes, I believe I may answer that you shall be exempt from that." While talking thus, we were drinking a heady wine. The Jesuit was a little elevated; he boasted of the consideration his company enjoyed, and of the lustre it reflected on its members. "Nothing," said he, "can be comparable to the advantages that a Jesuit, a man of merit, enjoys in society; all access is easy to him; he is every where sure of the most favourable and most flattering reception." His eloquence was so pressing, that he finished by persuading me.

"Well!" said I, "I am now determined to send the bishop a polite refusal. The rest requires a little more reflection. But I purpose going to Toulouse; and there, if my mother consent, I will follow the counsel you give me."

I communicated to my mother the observations of the Jesuit on the impropriety of going to Bourges to constitute myself the pen-

sioner of the archbishop. She felt the same delicacy and the same pride that I did, and our two letters to the bishop were written in that spirit. It only remained for me to consult her on my design of becoming a Jesuit. I never had the courage to do that. Neither her weakness nor mine could have supported that consultation: to reason coolly on it, it was necessary that we should be at a distance from each other. I reserved myself to write to her; and I went to Toulouse undetermined what course I should take. Shall I say that on my road I again missed my fortune?

A muleteer from Aurillac, who passed his life on the road between Clermont and Toulouse, undertook to conduct me. I went on one of his mules, and he, generally on foot, by my side. "Mr. Abbé," said he to me, "we shall be obliged to stop some days at home, for I have business that will detain me there. In God's name employ this interval of time in curing my daughter of her foolish devotion. I have but her, and were an angel to ask her, she would never marry him. Her obstinacy afflicts me." The commission was delicate; I found it comical, and willingly undertook it.

I confess I had figured to myself, as very poor and humble, the dwelling of a man who was trotting incessantly at the tail of his mules, now exposed to rain, and now to the bleak snow, on the roughest roads. I was therefore not a little surprised, on entering, to find a convenient house, well furnished, and of singular neatness, and also a kind of grey-clad sister, young, fresh, well made, who hastened to meet Peter (this was the name of the muleteer), and who embraced him as she uttered the endearing name of father. The supper she ordered for us had no less the air of comfort. The leg of mutton was tender, and the wine excellent. The chamber they gave me had, in its simplicity, almost the elegance of luxury. I had never lain in so soft a bed. Before I went to sleep I reflected on what I had seen. "Is it," said I to myself, "in order to pass a few hours of his life at his ease that this man tortures and consumes the rest of it in such painful labour? No, he labours to procure tranquillity and repose for old age; and it is the prospect of this repose that lightens his fatigues. But this only daughter, whom he loves so tenderly, what can have persuaded her, young and beautiful as she is, to wear the habit of a nun? Why is that grey-coloured dress, that unplaited linen, that golden cross on her breast, and that close handkerchief on her bosom? Yet the hair that she conceals under that fillet is of a sweet colour. The little that can be seen of her neck is white as ivory. And her arms! they too are of pure ivory, and incomparably turned!" I fell asleep on these reflections, and the next morning I had the pleasure of breakfasting with this fair votary. She obligingly inquired whether I had slept well? "I slept very sweetly," said I, "but not tranquilly; I was troubled with dreams. And you, Mademoiselle, did you sleep well?" "Tolerably well, thank God," said she. "Did you dream?" She blushed, and answered that she very rarely dreamt. "And when you do dream, it is surely of angels?" "Sometimes of martyrs," said

she, smiling. "Then it is of the martyrs you make." "I! I make none, Sir." "I will wager you make more than one; though you do not boast of it. As for me, when in my sleep I see the heavens open, I scarcely ever dream but of virgins. I behold them, some in white, others in a waist and petticoat of grey serge; and these simple dresses become them more than the richest ornament. Nothing, in that simple attire, impairs the native beauty of their hair or their complexion; nothing obscures the lustre of a pure forehead or of a rosy cheek; no plait deforms the figure; a strait girdle marks and indicates its roundness. An arm of lilies, and a fair hand with rosy fingers, issue, just as heaven made them, from a plain and modest sleeve; and what their close handkerchief conceals is easily divined. But whatever pleasure I may have in thus seeing, as I sleep, all these young virgins in heaven, I confess I am a little afflicted at finding them so ill placed." "Where, then, do you find them placed?" inquired she, with some embarrassment. "Alas! quite in a corner, almost alone, and (what vexes me still more) by the side of the Capucin monks!" "By the side of the Capucins!" cried she, contracting her brow. "Alas! yes; almost forsaken; while the august mothers of families, surrounded by the children they have borne, by the husbands they have already rendered so happy on earth, by their parents, whose age they consoled and comforted, are placed on a distinguished eminence, in the view of all heaven, and all brilliant with glory." "And priests," retorted she, with a malicious air, "where are they put?" "If there be any," answered I, "they are surely thrust into some corner, at a distance from that of the virgins." "Indeed, I believe it," said she; "that is exceedingly proper; for priests would be to them most dangerous neighbours."

Honest Peter was very much amused at this dispute on our professions. He had never seen his daughter so lively, nor so talkative; for I took care, as Montaigne says, to put into my provocation a sweet sour point of winning flattering gaiety that, while it seemed to displease, was not *unwelcome* to her. At last her father, the evening before we set off for Toulouse, took me alone into his chamber, and said to me: "I see plainly, Mr. Abbé, that, without me, you and my daughter will never agree. Let us put an end to this dispute between a nun and an abbé: the means are easy; do you cast off these bands, and let her throw away her collar; and I have some notion that if you be inclined, she would not want much persuasion to be inclined too. As to what regards me, I have for ten years done the commissions of your honest father; I am told by every one that you are like him, and I'll act roundly and cordially with you." He then opened the drawers of his bureau, and, shewing me piles of crowns, "Look ye," said he, "in business there is but one word necessary. Here is what I have saved, and what I am still hoarding up for my grandchildren, if my daughter should bless me with any; it shall be for your children if you choose, if you can win my daughter."

I will not say that the sight of this treasure did not at all tempt me. The offer was the more seducing to me, as honest Peter

made no other condition than that of rendering his daughter happy. "I shall continue," said he, "to drive my mules: at every journey I shall augment this pile of crowns as I pass, and you shall dispose of them; my life is a life of labour and fatigue. I will not quit it while I have health and strength; and when my back shall be bent, and my hams stiffened with age, I'll come and finish my days quietly with you." "Ah! my good friend," said I, "who deserves better than you the gentle repose of a happy and long age! But what are you thinking of, when you propose to marry your daughter to a man who has already five children?" "You, Mr. Abbé! five children, at your age!" "It is indeed true. Have I not two sisters and three brothers? Am not I their only father? It is from my labours, and not from yours, that they must live: it is I who must support them." "And do you think you can earn as much with your Latin as I with my mules?" "I hope so," said I: "but I will at least do all that depends on me." "Then you won't have my little nun? Yet she is very pretty; and particularly so since you have ruffled her a little." "Certainly," said I, "she is charming and lovely; and she would tempt me more than your crowns. But, as I have told you, nature has already thrown five children into my arms: marriage would soon bring five others, and, perhaps, more; for your devotees are very prolific; and I should then be too much embarrassed." "'Tis a pity," said he: "my daughter will now never marry." "I think I can assure you," said I, "that she has no longer the same aversion to marriage. I have taught her, that in heaven good mothers are far above virgins; and, by choosing a husband that pleases her, it will be easy for you to instil into her soul this new species of devotion." My prediction was realized.

Arrived at Toulouse, I called on father Noaillac. "Your affair is going on rapidly," said he: "I have found here several Jesuits who know you, and who have added their voices to mine. You are proposed and accepted; to-morrow you may enter if you please. The provincial expects you." I was a little surprised at his being so urgent; but I made no complaint, and suffered him to conduct me to the provincial. I found him fully disposed to receive me as soon as I should think fit, provided my vocation, said he, was sincere and decided. I answered that, on leaving my mother, I had not had the courage to declare my intention to her; but that I would go no farther without consulting her, and asking her consent; and I requested time to write to her, and to receive her answer. The provincial thought all this very proper; and on leaving him I wrote.

The answer arrived very quickly; and great God! what an answer! what language, and what eloquence! Not one of the illusions with which father Noaillac had filled my head, had made the smallest impression on the mind of my mother. She had seen only the absolute dependence, the profound submission, the blind obedience to which her son was going to devote himself by taking the habit of a Jesuit. "And how can I think," said she, "that you will still be mine? You will no longer be your own. What hope can I find for my children in him who will himself have no

existence but that of which a stranger may dispose at his will? I am told, I am assured, that if, by the caprice of your superiors, you be nominated to go to India, to China, or Japan, and the general send you there, you cannot hesitate; and that, without resistance, and without reply, you must go. What! my son, has not God made you an independent being? Has he not given you a sound reason, a kind heart, a feeling soul? Has he endowed you with a will so naturally upright and just, and with inclinations so eminently virtuous, only to reduce you to the state of an obedient machine? Oh! attend to me! leave those vows, those inflexible rules, to souls that feel the necessity of such chains. I dare assure you, I who know you well, that your's delights in freedom, and that the more independent it is, the more forcibly will it stimulate you to all that is honourable and praise-worthy. Ah! my dear boy! recal that fatal moment, yet dear to my memory, though it rend my heart to recollect it, that moment when, in the midst of your afflicted family, Heaven gave you force to revive its hopes by declaring yourself its support. And that heart which nature has made capable of these emotions, will you render it better by enslaving it? When it shall have renounced the liberty of indulging them, when you shall retain nothing of yourself, what will become of those virtuous resolutions of never abandoning your brothers, your sisters, or your mother? Ah! you are lost to them: they expect nothing more from you. My children! your second father is dead to the world and to nature. Weep over him. And I, hopeless mother, I will weep too over you, whom he has forsaken. Great God! was it this you secretly meditated at home with that perfidious Jesuit? Did he come to steal a son from an unhappy widow, and a father from five orphan children! Cruel pitiless man! And with what deceitful gentleness he flattered me! That, they say, is their genius and their character. But you, my son, you who never before had a secret for your mother, you too deceived me! Has he then taught you dissimulation? and your first essay has been to entrap your mother! The noble and generous motive for refusing the aid of the bishop was but a vain pretext to divert me, and disguise your designs! No, all this cannot come from you. I love rather to think that some sorcery has fascinated your mind. I will not cease to esteem and to love my son: these are two sentiments to which I am more attached than to life. 'Tis some ambitious hope that has intoxicated him. He believed he was sacrificing himself for me, and for my children. His head has erred, but his heart is pure. He will not read this letter, bathed with his mother's tears, without detesting the perfidious counsels that had for a moment perverted him."

My mother was indeed right: it was impossible for me to finish reading her letter, without being suffocated with tears and sobs. From that moment the idea of becoming a Jesuit was discarded; and I hastened to go and tell the provincial that I declined it. Without disapproving my respect for the authority of my mother, he expressed some regret that was personal to me, and said that the company would always think kindly of my good intentions.

Indeed, I found the masters of the college favourably disposed to give me, as at Clermont, scholars from the different classes. But my ambition then was to have a school of philosophy; and to effect this my mind was occupied.

My age was always the first obstacle to my views. In beginning my degrees by philosophy, I thought myself at least capable of teaching its elements; but scarcely one of my scholars would be younger than myself. On this great difficulty I consulted an old private tutor, whose name was Morin, the most distinguished in the university. He conversed with me a long time, and found me sufficiently advanced. But how could I persuade these young men to be my pupils! However, an idea struck him, that fixed his attention. "That would be excellent!" said he, laughing in his sleeve. "Never mind, I'll try it; it may succeed." I was curious to know what this idea was. "The Bernardins," said he, "have here a kind of seminary, to which they send their young men from all parts, to complete their studies. The professor of philosophy, whom they expected, is taken ill, and they have applied to me to supply his place till he arrives. As I am too much engaged to be his substitute, they beg me to recommend one; and I will propose you."

They accepted me on his word. But, when he took me there the next day, I distinctly saw how ridiculous they thought the contrast between my functions and my age. Almost all the college had beards, and the master had none. To the contemptuous smile that my presence excited, I opposed a cool, modest, and dignified air; and, while Morin conversed with the superiors, I inquired of the young men what were the regulations of the college for the time of study and the hour of lectures. I spoke to them of some books with which they must provide themselves, in order to suit their lectures to their studies; and, in all I said, I was careful that there should be nothing either too young or too familiar; so much so, that, toward the end of the conversation, I perceived that, on their part, a serious attention had taken place of the light tone and jeering air with which it had begun.

The result of the consultation that Morin had just had with the superiors was, that I should give my first lecture on the following morning.

I was nettled at the insulting smile I had experienced on presenting myself to these monks. I wished to revenge myself; and I did it thus. On beginning the philosophical lectures, it was customary to dictate a kind of prelude that should serve as the vestibule to that temple of wisdom into which the tutor introduces his pupils, and which, therefore, ought to unite some elegance and majesty. I composed this piece with care; I learned it by heart; I traced, and I learned at the same time, the plan that the various divisions of this edifice should present when united, and, with my head full of my subject, I gravely and proudly mounted the desk. My young Bernardins seated themselves around me; and their superiors stood leaning on the backs of their chairs, impatient to hear me. I asked, if they were ready to write as I dictated. They answer, yes. Then folding my arms, without book or paper



before me, speaking as from abundant knowledge, I dictate my preamble, and then my distribution of this course of philosophy, in which I marked, as I continued the most distinguished points, and most prominent views.

I cannot, without smiling, recollect the astonished air of the Bernardins, and with what profound esteem they received me when I descended. This first trick had too well succeeded not to induce me to continue and support the part I acted. I every day studied the lecture I was to give, and, in dictating it from my memory, I had the air of arranging and composing, without needing reflection. Some time afterward, Morin called on them, and they spoke to him of me with as much astonishment as of a prodigy. They shewed him my lectures; and when he himself expressed to me his surprise at my having dictated them without notes, I answered, in the language of Horace, that "eloquence is the natural offspring of a clear and accurate conception." Thus, among Gascons, I began by a gasconade; but it was necessary to my success. And when the Bernardin professor came to resume his place, Morin, who had more pupils than he could himself attend to, gave me as many of them as I wished. Fortune too smiled on me from another quarter.

There was at Toulouse, a kind of college, founded for students from the province of Limosin. In this college, called Saint Catherine, the scholars had their lodging gratis, and eight guineas a-year during the five years graduation. When one of these places was vacant, the scholars themselves elected a successor by ballot: a good and sage institution. It was on one of these vacancies that my young countrymen had the kindness to think of me. In this college, where liberty was only regulated by decency, each lived as he pleased: the porter and the cook were paid at a common expense. Thus, by a rigid economy, I could aid my family with the greater part of the fruit of my labour; and these savings, that increased every year with the number of my pupils, became so considerable as to begin to make my mother comfortable. But, while fortune was procuring for me the greatest enjoyments, nature was preparing for me the utmost affliction. However, I had yet some time of prosperity.

In looking over, by accident, a collection of prize poems, crowned at the academy of Floral Games, I was struck with the richness of the prizes it distributed: they were flowers of gold and silver. I was not equally astonished at the beauty of the pieces that had gained the prizes, and it appeared to me easy enough to make better. I thought of the pleasure of sending my mother these gold and silver bunches of flowers, and of the pleasure she herself would feel on receiving them from my hand. Hence I conceived the idea and desire of becoming a poet. I had never studied the rules of our poetry; but I went immediately and bought a small book that taught these rules; and, by the advice of the bookseller, I purchased, at the same time, a copy of the odes of Rousseau. I meditated and reflected on both, and was soon occupied with the search of some good subject for an ode. I fixed on the invention of gunpowder. I recollect it began thus:

*" Kneaded by some infernal fury's bloody hands."*

I could not recover from my astonishment at having written so fine an ode. I recited it with all the intoxication of enthusiasm and self love; and, when I sent it to the academy, I had no doubt but that it must bear away the prize. It did not succeed; it did not even obtain the consolation of honourable mention. I was enraged; and, in my indignation, I wrote to Voltaire; sent him my poem, and cried to him for vengeance: all the world knows with what kindness Voltaire received all young men, who exhibited any talent for poetry: the French Parnassus was an empire whose sceptre he would have yielded to no one on earth, but whose subjects he delighted to see multiply. He sent me one of those answers that he could turn with so much grace, and of which he was so liberal. The praises he bestowed on my poem amply consoled me for what I called the injustice of the academy, whose judgment, as I said, did not weigh one single grain in the balance against such a suffrage as that of Voltaire. But what flattered me still more than his letter, was the present he sent me of a copy of his works, corrected by his own hand. I was mad with pride and joy; and I ran about the town and the colleges with his present in my hands. Thus began my correspondence with that illustrious man, and that intimate friendship which lasted, without any change, for five and thirty years, dissolved only by his death.

I continued to write for the academy of Floral Games, and obtained prizes every year. But the last of these little literary triumphs had a more rational and more sensible interest for me than that of vanity; and for that reason this scene deserves a place in the memoirs I transmit to my children.

As, in the estimation of mankind, all is appreciated by comparison, and as, at Toulouse, there was nothing more brilliant in literature than success in the lists of the Floral Games, the public assembly of this academy for distributing the prizes, had the pomp and crowd of a great solemnity. Three deputies from the parliament presided at it. The chief magistrates and all the corporation of the city attended in their robes. The whole hall, in the form of an amphitheatre, was filled with the principal inhabitants of the town, and the most beautiful women. The brilliant youth of the university occupied the space around the academic circle: the hall, which was very spacious, was decorated with festoons of flowers and laurel, and the trumpets of the city, as each prize was given, made the capital resound with the signal of victory.

I had that year sent five pieces to the academy: one ode, two poems, and two idyls. The ode failed: the prize was not given. The two poems were supposed to have equal merit: one of them obtained the prize for epic poetry, and the other a prose prize that happened to be vacant. One of the two idyls obtained the prize of pastoral poetry, and the other an inferior honour. Thus the three prizes, and the only three the academy was going to distribute, were adjudged to me: it was I who was to receive them all. I walked to the hall with such consummate vanity, that I could never recollect it since without confusion, nor without pity for my youth. It was still much worse when I was loaded

with my flowers and my crowns. But where is the poet of twenty, whose head would not have turned with such honours?

An attentive silence reigns in the hall, and after the eulogy of *Clémence Isaure*, foundress of the Floral Games, a eulogy inexhaustible, and pronounced every year with becoming devotion, at the foot of her statue, comes the distribution of the prizes. The judges announce that the prize for the ode is reserved. It was well known that I had sent an ode to the academy; it was known, too, that I was the author of an idyl that had not been crowned; I was pitied, but I smiled at it. The poem to which the prize is adjudged is then named aloud; and at these words, *let the author advance*, I rise, approach, and receive the prize. I am applauded as usual, and I hear whispered around me: "He has lost two; but he gets the third; he has more than one string to his bow, and more than one arrow to shoot." I retire to seat myself modestly, amid the sound of the trumpets. But soon the second poem is announced, to which the academy, they say, has thought proper to adjudge the prize of eloquence, rather than to reserve it. The author is called, and again it is I who rise. The applauses redouble, and the reading of this poem is listened to with the same favor and indulgence as that of the first. I had again taken my place, when the idyl was proclaimed, and the author invited to come and receive the prize. I rise for the third time. Then, if I had written *Cinna*, *Athalie*, and *Zaire*, I could not have been more applauded. The interest I excited was extreme. The men bore me through the crowd on their shoulders; the women embraced me. Light vapour of vain glory! Who knows it better than I; since, of these essays that were thought so brilliant, there is not a single one that, forty years afterward, though read even with indulgence, has appeared to me worthy a place in the collection of my works. But what still sensibly touches me in the recollection of that day, so flattering for me, is what I am going to relate.

Amid the tumult and noise of the captivated crowd, two long black arms are raised and extended to me. I look, I recognize my master of the third class, the good father Malosse, whom I had not seen for eight years, and who happened to be present at this ceremony. I instantly rush forward, cut my way through the crowd, and, throwing myself into his arms, with my three prizes: "Here, father," said I to him, "they are yours; it is to you I owe them." The good Jesuit raised his eyes to heaven; and they were filled with tears of joy: and, I may say, I was more sensible to the pleasure I gave him, than to the brilliancy of my triumph. "Ah! my children, that which interests the heart is always grateful: it delights to the end of life. That which has only flattered the pride of genius recurs but as a vain dream, the error of which we blush to have so madly cherished."

These literary amusements, although very seducing to me, did not trench on my more solid occupations. I gave to poetry my hours of recreation and leisure; but, at the same time, I applied assiduously to my studies, and to those of my school. In my second year of philosophy, not being able to engage my Jesuit pro-

fessor to teach us the Newtonian system, I determined to go and study it at the school of the *Doctrinaires*. Their college, called the *Esquile*, had, as professors in philosophy, two men of distinguished merit; but one of the two, and he was mine, with much information and talent, inclined too much, either by disposition or feebleness of constitution, to indolence and repose. He found it convenient to have in me a pupil, who, having already studied philosophy, might, from time to time, spare him the fatigue and weariness of lecturing.

"Mount," would he say to me, "mount the rostrum and render that easy to them which you so easily understand." This eulogy well repaid the pains I gave myself; for it insured me the confidence of the scholars, and made the pensioners of the college desirous of having me for their private tutor; an excellent and solid provision for me.

To please my professor, I consented, against my inclination, to engage in public disputations. He attached a vast importance to the numbering me among those of his pupils who were soon to appear in public: and, as he was a member of the Academy of Sciences at Toulouse, he would have my thesis dedicated to that company. "A thesis thus honoured," said he, "will be equally new and striking." It was by this exhibition that he wished to terminate his philosophic career; and he conceived the project of adding to the pomp of this spectacle a signal testimony in my favour, which, though very honourable to me, should completely astonish me. He succeeded but too well; and my astonishment was such, that it had nearly made me mad, or foolish, for the rest of my life.

In these public exercises, it was the constant custom for the professor to be in his rostrum and his scholars before him, in what is called a desk, a kind of tribune below the rostrum. When all the company were seated, and the illustrious academy arranged before the tribune, notice was given me, and I appeared. You may well conceive that I had prepared a compliment for the academy, and in this little speech I had employed all the art and talent I possessed. I knew it by heart; I had repeated it twenty times without any hesitation, and was so sure of my memory that I had neglected to take with me the manuscript. I appeared, and, instead of finding my professor in his rostrum, I perceived him seated with the academicians. I respectfully invited him, by my looks, to come and take his place. "Mount, Sir," said he aloud, with his air of indolence and security, "mount the rostrum or the desk, just as you please; you have no need of me." This splendid testimony excited in the assembly a murmur of surprise, and, I think, of approbation: but its effect on me was that of freezing my senses, and disordering my brain. Amazed, trembling, I ascend the steps of the tribune, and kneel, as was usual, as if to implore the light of the Holy Spirit. But when I want to recollect the beginning of my compliment, before I rise, I cannot: memory is lost; the clue has escaped; I search for it in vain, and only find a thick impenetrable cloud. I make incredible efforts to recover the first word of my speech; but not a word, not one idea recurs." In this

state of anguish, I remain for some minutes in a feverish stupor, and almost ready to burst the veins and nerves of my head by the frightful contention into which this labour had put them, when suddenly, and as by miracle, the cloud that enveloped my mind is dissipated; my thoughts are freed, my ideas revive, I seize the thread of my eulogium, and, much fatigued, but tranquil and reassured, it is pronounced. I say nothing of the success it had; praise is rarely ill received; and I had seasoned this as delicately as I could. Neither do I boast of the favour that supported me in all this exercise. In leading me to the most brilliant questions in physics, the academicians, who deigned to contend with me, studied to give effect to my answers. They were true Mæcenases, full of indulgence and kindness. But what was most remarkable, and most affecting to me, was the noble conduct of the Jesuit professor, whom I had too hastily quitted to go to the *Esquile*, and who, at this moment, came to make me feel my error: he disputed with me last, on the system of gravitation, and, with the appearance of attacking me with all his force, he contrived to offer me every means of developing my knowledge. I fortunately gave him to understand, by my answers, that, in the manner he contended with me, it was easy to recognize the superiority of the master, who would exercise the powers of his scholar, but was careful not to crush them. When I descended, the president of the academy, in congratulating me, said that the academy could not mark its satisfaction better than by offering to number me among its associates, as there was then a vacancy. I accepted this offer with humble gratitude, and received the prize of my combat amid the plaudits of the assembly.

But the solid benefit I derived from these youthful successes was the number of pupils that increased my school, and enabled me to send additional aid to my mother. Rich enough, by my industry, to provide for the education of the eldest of my brothers, I now lent him a helping hand, and brought him to Toulouse. He was fourteen, and did not know a word of Latin; but he had a very lively conception, an excellent memory, and a passionate desire of profiting by my lessons. I simplified the rules, and abridged the method; in six months he had surmounted all the difficulties of syntax; and a year more, well employed, enabled him to proceed without a master. That was his ambition; for he saw me overloaded with employment, and was gratified when he could lighten it. Poor brother! The sentiment he felt for me was not friendship only, it was worship. The name of brother had in his mouth a character of sanctity. He expressed to me his desire of dedicating himself to the church; and of this I was glad: for this same desire began to cool in me, for more than one reason, and particularly on account of the forbidding difficulties that were thrown in my way.

The college of Saint Catherine, where I had a place, had for its inspector and spiritual guard, one of the archbishop's proctors, whose name was Goutelongue, an intriguing, haughty, confident man, and, as was said, somewhat of a knave, who wanted to lead the college at his will, and dispose of the scholarships as his ca-

price directed. He vaunted of his intimacy with the archbishop, rang the changes on his lordship's authority, and, being himself a proctor, so far intimidated some, and seduced others, that he had formed a party among our comrades, subjugated by fear and hope. But there was one Pujalou in the college, of a frank, independent, and firm character, who, wearied with this sovereignty, dared to oppose him, and gave the signal for rebellion against his usurped authority. "What right, my friends," said he to his young companions and countrymen, "has this man to intrigue in our assemblies, and influence our elections? The founder of this college, in leaving to ourselves the liberty of nominating and electing to the vacant scholarships, has wisely judged that youth is the age at which there is most natural equity, most rectitude, and most integrity. Why should we suffer any one to corrupt the equity that animates us? Among us, the vacant scholarships are destined to the most worthy, and not to the most patronized. If Goutelongue wants creatures, let him obtain favours for them from the archbishop, and not come to gratify them at our expense. To conduct us in our choice, we have our conscience, which is, at least, equivalent to that of the proctor. I, who know him, declare that I confide less in his probity than in that of a horse-jockey." This last stroke, though not of noble eloquence, was that which carried the day: the proctor ever afterward retained the epithet of the jockey, and his intrigues were likened to the honest dealings of that profession.

I arrived in these circumstances, and Pujalou had no difficulty to engage me in his party. From that moment I was noted in the tablets of the proctor; but I was soon signalized there by a mark that was personal to me. There was a scholarship vacant in the college. The contest between the two parties was doubtful, and, in case of equality, it was the archbishop who decided the election. Our party consulted its forces, and thought itself sure of carrying it, but by a single vote. In the evening, before the election, this vote was withdrawn from us. One of our fellow students, an honest and good youth, but timid, had disappeared. We learnt that, in a village three leagues from Toulouse, he had an uncle, a clergyman, and that this uncle had come and taken him away, to pass the Christmas holidays at his house. We had no doubt but that this was a stratagem of Goutelongue. We knew the name of the village, and the road to it; but it was already dark, the rain that fell was mixed with snow and hail, and it was a folly to think that, in such weather, the clergyman would consent to let his nephew come, particularly as he had taken him away at the request of the proctor. "Never mind," said I suddenly, "I'll go and fetch him, and will bring him back to you behind me; give me but a good horse." The horse was provided in an instant, and, muffled up in Pujalou's long cloak, I arrived, in two hours, at the door of the parsonage, just as the rector, his nephew, and his maid, were going to bed. My fellow student came to me, when he saw me alight; and, as I embraced him, "Courage, my friend," said I, "or you are dishonoured." The rector, to whom I announced myself as coming from the college

of Saint Catherine, inquired the object of my journey: "I come," said I, "in the name of Jesus Christ, the universal father of the poor, to conjure you not to be the accomplice of the despoiler of the poor, of that unjust and cruel man who steals from them their substance, to lavish it at his caprice." I then developed to him the arts of Goutelongue, to usurp over us the right of nominating to the vacant places, and consign them to intrigue. "To-morrow," said I, "we have either to elect a scholar whom he protects, and who has no need of the place that is vacant, or a poor student who deserves and expects it. Which of the two would you wish to succeed?" He answered that the choice would not be difficult, if it depended on him. "And it does depend on you," said I: "the party of the poor youth want but one vote; that vote was assured to him; and, at the solicitation, at the instance of Goutelongue, you have brought your nephew here to deprive him of it. Restore it to him: restore him the bread of which you have robbed him." Amazed and confused, he again answered that his nephew was free, that he had brought him to pass the holidays with him, and that he had used no compulsion. "If he be free," replied I, "let him come with me; let him come and fulfil his duty; let him come and save his honour; for his honour is lost, if it be believed that he is sold to Goutelongue." Then looking at the young man, and seeing him disposed to follow me, "Come," said I, "embrace your uncle, and come and prove to the college that you are neither of you the slave of the proctor." In an instant we were both on horseback; and far from the village.

Our fellow students were not gone to bed. We found them at supper; and with what transports of joy did they see us arrive together! I thought that Pujalou would have smothered me with embraces: we were wet to the very bones. They began by drying us; and then the ham, the sausage, and the wine, were lavished on us. But, prudent amid so much intoxication, I required that the subject of our joy might be kept secret from the opposite party, till the moment of election; and, indeed, the sudden appearance of the fugitive was a death-blow to our adversaries. We carried the vacant place at the point of the sword; and Goutelongue, who knew the cause of it, never forgave me.

Thus, when I presented myself to the archbishop, to beg him to obtain from the bishop of my diocese permission to be ordained by him, I found him quite prejudiced against me: "I was only a gallant abbé, wholly occupied with poetry, paying my court to the ladies, and writing for them songs and idyls, nay, sometimes, in the dusk of the evening, taking my walk with pretty girls.".....This archbishop was La Roche-Aymond, a man of little delicacy in his political morality; but, affecting rigour for vices that were not his own, he wanted to make me do penance to the most dirty and most bigoted of all seminaries. I recognized the good offices of Goutelongue, and my disgust for the seminary of Calvet revealed to me, as a secret I had concealed from myself, how much my inclination for the church had cooled.

My correspondence with Voltaire, to whom I sometimes wrote, as I sent him my poetry, and who had the kindness to answer me, had not a little contributed to change my fancy for this profession.

Voltaire, in encouraging me to hope for success in the career of poetry, pressed me to go to Paris, the only school of taste, where talent can form itself. I answered him that Paris was, for me, too vast a theatre; that I should there lose myself in the crowd; that, beside, being born without fortune, I should want the means of existence; that at Toulouse I had created myself a comfortable and honourable livelihood, and that, unless Paris could offer me one nearly equal, I should still have the fortitude to resist my desire of going to render my homage to the great man who deigned to invite me.

However, it soon became necessary to decide. Literature at Paris, the bar at Toulouse, or the seminary at Limoges: these were what offered to me, and in each I beheld only uncertainty and delay. In this irresolution, I felt the necessity of consulting my mother: I had no idea that she was ill; but I knew she was feeble. I hoped that my presence would restore her to health. I went to see her. How charming, how delightful would this journey have been to me, had it corresponded to so dear a hope!

I leave my brother at Toulouse; and, on a little horse I had bought, I set off: I arrive at the farm, at the hamlet of Saint Thomas. It was a holiday. My eldest sister, and the daughter of my aunt d'Albois, had come thither for a walk. There I rest myself, and change my clothes; for I carried in a bundle, in my cloak-bag, all the dress of an Abt . From Saint Thomas to Bort, by fording the river, there is but one meadow to cross. I take the two girls across the river on my horse, and I arrive at the town by that charming walk. Pardon these details: I repeat it again, it is for my children that I write.

As I passed by the church, the people were at vespers; one of my old school-fellows, Odde, the same that afterwards married my sister, met me as he was going there, and he soon spread the news of my arrival in the church. My friends first steal out, then our neighbours, and insensibly the whole congregation: the church is empty, and my house is soon filled and surrounded by this crowd, who come to see me. Alas! I was at that moment severely afflicted! I had just embraced my mother; and in her shrunk form, in her cough, in the burning red that coloured her cheek, I thought I recognized the same disorder of which my father died. It was but too true; my mother was attacked by it before the age of forty. That fatal consumption was contagious in my family, and made most cruel ravages. I did all that was possible to dissimulate to my mother the grief that seized me. She, who knew her disorder, forgot it, or at least appeared to forget it on seeing me, and she talked to me only of her joy. I afterward learnt that she had engaged the physician, and my aunts, to flatter me on the state of her health, and not suffer me to indulge my inquietude. They all united with her to deceive me, and my soul caught eagerly at the gentle hope. I return to the inhabitants.



My mother was enchanted at my academic successes, and the enchantment had spread itself around her. The flowers of silver that I sent her, and with which she every year adorned the altar on the *Fête-Dieu*, had given such an idea of me in the town, as is not to be defined. The people there, who have since, perhaps, changed their nature like so many others, were then kindness itself. Each was emulous of loading me with all that friendship can dictate. The good mothers were pleased to recal to me my infancy: the men listened to me as if my words were to have been collected and preserved. Yet I only uttered the simple touching words that my heart prompted in its emotion. As every body came to congratulate my mother, Miss B\*\*\* came too with her sisters, and, according to custom, she was obliged to permit the new comer to embrace her. The others gently leaned to the innocent kiss I gave them, but she withdrew her cheek, and shunned it. I felt this difference, and was hurt.

Of the three weeks that I passed with my mother, it was impossible not to steal some moments from nature, in order to give them to grateful friendship. My mother desired it; and, that she might not deprive my friends of the pleasure of my visits, she herself went to the little treats they gave me. These treats were dinners that each friend gave in his turn. There, continually occupied and continually moved by what was said to her son, and by what her son answered, observing my very looks, anxious at every moment how I should reply to the attentions that besieged me on every side, my mother felt these long dinners a fatigue to her mind, and a painful effort for her frail organs. Our private conversations, by creating a livelier interest, fatigued her still much more. I endeavoured to spare her feeble voice, either by my long recitals, or by my diligence in interrupting the dialogue to interpose my reflections. But, as animated whilst she listened as whilst she spoke to me, attention was not less hurtful to her health than speaking, and I could not see, without the most afflicting emotion, that fire sparkle in her eyes which was consuming her blood.

I at last spoke to her of the diminished ardour I felt for the profession of the church, and of my irresolution about the choice of a new one. It was then that she appeared calm, and spoke to me coolly.

"The profession of the church" said she to me, "essentially imposes two duties; that of being pious, and that of being chaste: it is impossible to be a good priest but at this price, and on these two points it belongs to you to examine yourself. As to the bar, if you enter there, I must require from you the most inviolable promise that you will never affirm what you do not believe to be true, nor ever defend what you believe is not just. With regard to the career that M. de Voltaire invites you to pursue, I think it a prudent precaution to assure to yourself at Paris a situation that may leave you time to instruct yourself, and to acquire more talent; for you must not flatter yourself; what you have already done is but little. If M. de Voltaire can procure you some honourable, liberal, and sure employment, go, my dear son, go enter the

lists of fame and of fortune, I consent ; but never forget that the most honourable and most dignified companion of genius is virtue." Thus spoke this astonishing woman, who had no other education than that of the little convent at Bort.

Her physician thought it necessary to inform me that my presence was hurtful to her. " Her disorder," said he to me, " is a blood too vivid and too highly inflamed ; I calm it as much as I can, and you, involuntarily, nay, necessarily agitate it again, and every evening I find her pulse higher and more frequent. If you wish her health to be re-established, Sir, you must leave her ; and, above all, be careful that your parting be not too affecting for her." It was a cruel parting ! and, in that moment, my mother's courage was superior to mine ; for she flattered herself no longer, and I flattered myself still. At the first word I said to her of the necessity of returning to my pupils, " Yes, my son," said she, " you must go. I have seen you. Our hearts have communed. We have nothing more to say to each other but a tender farewell, for I have no need to recommend....." She interrupted herself, and as her eyes filled with tears, " I am thinking," said she, " of that good mother I have lost, and who loved you so. She died like a saint ; she would have experienced a real joy to have seen you once again. But let us try and die as like a saint as herself : we shall meet again before God." She afterward changed the subject, and talked to me of Voltaire. I had sent her the handsome present he had made me ; the copy of his works : it was a corrected edition ; she had read it, and was reading it again. " If you see him," said she, " thank him for the pleasant moments he has made your mother pass ; tell him that she knew by heart the second act of *Zaire*, that she wept over *Merope*, and that these verses of the *Henriade*, on *Hope*, have neither left her memory nor her heart."

.....that which heaven sends inspires  
No empty pleasures, nor no vain desires ;  
It brings God's promise, his defence and aid,  
Pure, immutable, as the heaven he made.

This allusion to herself, speaking as of one who would soon cease to exist, rent my very heart. But as I was advised to avoid carefully all that might affect her too sensibly, I dissembled what I presaged : and the next day, both mutually studying to conceal the affliction of parting, we only gave to our farewell what it was impossible for us to refuse to nature.

From the moment I was separated from her, I resigned myself to my deep sorrow ; and all the recollections that occurred to me on my journey united to torture me. " Yet a little while, and she will be no longer mine ; this mother who, from my birth, has breathed only for me, this adored mother whose displeasure I feared as that of heaven, and, if I dare say it, yet more than heaven itself ;" for I thought of her much oftener than of God ; and when I had some temptation to subdue, or some passion to repress, it was always my mother that I fancied present. " What would she say, if she knew what I feel ! What would be her confusion, what would be her grief !" Such were the reflections that

I opposed to myself; and my reason then resumed its empire, seconded by nature, who always did what she pleased with my heart. Those who, like me, have known this tender filial love, need not be told what was the sadness and despondency of my soul. Yet I still held by a frail hope; a hope too dear to be wholly relinquished until the last moment.

I went to complete the course of my studies; and, as I had providentially entered myself at the school for canon law, it is probable that my final decision would have been in favour of the bar. But, toward the end of this year, a little note from Voltaire came and determined me to set off for Paris. "Come," said he, in his note; "and come without inquietude. M. Orri, whom I have spoken to, undertakes to provide for you. Signed VOLTAIRE." Who M. Orri was I knew not. I went to ask my good friends at Toulouse, and shewed them my note. "M. Orri!" exclaimed they; "why! 'tis the comptroller general of finance: my dear friend, your fortune is made: you will be a farmer-general. Remember us in your prosperity. Protected by the minister, it will be easy for you to gain his esteem and confidence. You will be at the source of favour. Dear Marmontel, make some of its rivulets flow down to us. A little streamlet of Pactolus will content our ambition." One would be Receiver General, another would be satisfied with an humbler place in the finance; or with some other employment, of two or three hundred louis a-year; and this depended on me!

I had forgotten to say that, among us young students, and in order to rival the academy of Floral Games, we had formed a literary society, formerly celebrated under the name of *The Little Academy*. It was there that all vied to exalt my hopes: and I soon became eager to set off. But as my future opulence did not supersede the necessity of present economy, I was enquiring how I could make my journey at the least expense, when a president of the parliament, M. de Puget, sent for me, and proposed to me in obliging terms to travel to Paris with his son, in a litter, at our joint expense. I told the president that the litter appeared to me very slow and tedious, but that the pleasure of being in good company would compensate for the inconvenience; that, as to the expense of the journey, I had already calculated the amount; it would cost me but five guineas by the Courier, and I was determined not to exceed that sum. The president, after having tried in vain to draw something more from me, thought proper to accept what I offered: and, indeed, as he must otherwise have paid the whole expense of the litter, my little share was all gain to him.

I left my brother at Toulouse; and my scholarship at Saint Catherine's would have been secure to him, had he been in the class of philosophy; but these places could be held only during the five years of graduation. He was therefore obliged to renounce this advantage for the present, and I gave him an asylum in the Irish seminary. I paid one year of his schooling in advance, and, when I bade him farewell, I left him all the rest of my money, having only one half-crown for myself when I set off from Toulouse. But, in passing through Montauban, I was to find a fresh supply.

Montauban, as well as Toulouse, had a literary academy, that every year gave a prize. I had gained it this year, and had not taken it away. It was a silver lyre, of the value of twelve louis. On my arrival, I went and took my lyre, and instantly sold it. Thus, after paying the muleteer in advance the expenses of my journey, and after treating my friends handsomely, who accompanied me in cavalcade as far as Montauban, I had still more than six guineas in my pocket. Was not this an ample provision for one whom fortune awaited at Paris? Never did any one go more slowly to meet her. Yet this journey in the litter was not so tiresome as I should have thought it. I was fortunate in finding an honest muleteer. He gave us most excellent cheer. I have never eaten better red-legged partridges, nor more juicy turkeys, nor better tasted truffles than he provided. I was ashamed at being so well fed for my five guineas, and I determined to recompence this man as soon as I should be in a situation to be more liberal.

It is true that my fellow traveller paid him better than I: and he was willing enough to take advantage of it; but he did not find me disposed to entire acquiescence. The first day, I gave him the back seat, and, notwithstanding the sickness which the balancing of the carriage, and the motion backward occasioned me, I suffered the inconvenience. I even dissembled my disgust at hearing the most stupid of all spoiled children eternally displaying, with a puerile emphasis, his noble origin, his immense fortune, and the dignity of president, with which his father was invested. I let him boast of the beauty of his large blue eyes, and the charms of his face, with which, he innocently told me, all the women were in love. He talked to me of their lures, of their caresses, of the kisses they gave his fine eyes; I listened patiently, and said to myself: "How ridiculous is vanity!"

The next day, he got into the carriage first, and seated himself on the back seat. "Softly, Marquis," said I; "in front, if you please. To-day it is my turn to be at my ease." He answered that it was his place, and that his father had understood that he should occupy the back seat. I replied that, if his father had understood it in his bargain, I had not understood it in mine; and that, had he proposed it to me, I should not have cased myself up, like a fool, in that dancing carriage; that I should now have been, for the same money, in the open air, upon a good horse, enjoying the scenery around me; that I had already been duped enough for having employed my five guineas so ill, and that I would not be so much so, as to give him constantly the best place. He persisted in keeping it; but, though he was as tall as I, I intreated him not to oblige me to force him from it, and to leave him in the road. He listened to this argument, and took the front seat. He was in ill humour till dinner time. However, he contented himself with depriving me of his conversation; but, at dinner, his superiority recurred to him. They brought us a red-legged partridge. He thought himself an excellent carver: *quo gestu lepores, et qua gallina secetur*. And, indeed, this exercise had made a part of his education. He took the partridge on his plate, cut off, very judiciously, the two wings and the two legs, kept the two wings

for himself, and left me the legs and the back-bone. "What!" said I, "You like the wings of a partridge?" "Yes," said he, "very well." "And I too," said I; and, smiling, without decomposing myself, I established the equality. "You make very free," said he, "to take a wing from my plate!" "You are much more so," answered I, in a firm tone, "for having taken two from the dish." He was red with anger; but it subsided, and we dined peaceably.

The next day—"It is your turn," said I, "to take the back seat of the carriage." He seated himself there, saying, "You do me a great favour:" and our *tête-à-tête* was going to be as silent as on the evening before, when an incident animated it. The marquis took snuff; I took it too, thanks to a young and pretty girl, who gave me a taste for it. In his sullen mood he opened his fine snuff-box, and I, who was not in ill humour, extended my hand, and took a pinch, as if we had been the best friends in the world. He did not refuse; and, after a few minutes reflection, "I must tell you," said he, "a circumstance that happened to M. de Maniban, first president of the parliament at Toulouse." I foresaw it was something impertinent, and I listened. "M. de Maniban," continued he, "once gave audience, in his cabinet, to a *quidam*, who had a cause, and who came to solicit his favour. The magistrate, as he listened, opened his snuff-box: the *quidam* took a pinch: the president did not discompose himself, but rang for his servant, and throwing away the snuff that the *quidam* had touched, he sent him for more." I avoided any appearance of applying this story to myself, and some little time afterward, when the coxcomb again displayed his box, I again took of his snuff as tranquilly as before. He looked surprised; and I, smiling, said, "Why don't you ring, marquis?" "Here is no bell." "You are very fortunate that there is not," said I; "for the *quidam* would have drubbed you soundly for having rung." You may guess the astonishment that my reply created. He chose to be angry; and I was angry in my turn. "Be quiet," said I, "or I'll trample on you. I see that I have got a young fop to correct, and, from this moment, I will submit to no impertinence. Recollect that we are going to a city, where the son of a provincial president is nothing; and begin from this time to be simple, polite, and modest, if you can: for, in the world, self-sufficiency, foppery, and foolish pride, will expose you to much more bitter vexations." While I spoke, he concealed his eyes, and I saw he wept. I pitied him, and assumed the tone of a sincere friend: I made him reflect on his ridiculous boasting, on his puerile vanity, and his foolish pretensions; and I thought I perceived that his head became gradually less inflated with the vapours that filled it. "What can I do?" said he, "I have been brought up thus." To various marks of my kindness, I added the politeness of almost always giving him the best place in the carriage; for I was more accustomed than he to the inconvenience of riding backward; and this complaisance completely reconciled us. However, as our conversation was often interrupted by long continued silence, I

had time to translate into verse the poem of *The Rape of the Lock*; an amusement that was soon to prove of such utility to me.

In my meditations, I had likewise two abundant sources of agreeable illusions. One was the hope of fortune, and, if heaven preserved my mother, the hope of enjoying her society at Paris: the other was the superb and fantastic picture I made myself of that capital, where that which I supposed least magnificent could not but have all the elegance of proportion, and all the beauty of simplicity. One of these illusions was destroyed on my arrival at Paris; the other did not flatter me long. - On my arrival, I lodged at the Julian-baths; and the next morning I was at the levee of Voltaire.

### BOOK III.

THOSE young men who, born with some genius and love for the arts, have been introduced into the presence of the most celebrated men in the art that forms their own study and delight, have felt, like me, the confusion, the oppression of heart, the kind of religious fear that I experienced in appearing before Voltaire.

Persuaded that I should have to speak first, I had turned in twenty ways the phrase with which I should address him; and was satisfied with none. He relieved me from this difficulty. On hearing my name, he came to me, and, extending his arms, "My good friend," said he, "I am very glad to see you. Yet I have bad news to tell you; M. Orri had undertaken to provide for you; M. Orri is no longer in favour."

I could scarcely have received a more severe, more sudden, or more unexpected blow; but I was not stunned by it. I have always been astonished at the courage I have felt on great occasions, for my heart is naturally feeble. "Well, Sir," said I, "then I must contend with adversity; I have long known it, and long struggled with it."—"I am glad to find you have confidence in your own powers. Yes, my good friend, the true and most worthy resource for a man of letters is in himself and in his genius. But, till yours shall have procured you something to exist on, I speak to you candidly as a friend, I must provide for you. I have not invited you hither to abandon you. If, even at this moment, you be in want of money, tell me so: I will not suffer you to have any other creditor than Voltaire." I returned him thanks for his kindness, assuring him that, for some time at least, I should not want to profit by it, and that, when I should, I would confidently have recourse to him. "You promise me," said he; "and I depend on you. In the mean time, let's hear what you think of applying to?"—"I really don't know; you must decide for me."—

"The stage, my friend, the stage is the most enchanting of all careers; it is there that, in one day, you may obtain glory and fortune. One successful piece renders a man at the same time rich and celebrated; and, if you take pains, you will succeed."—"I do not want ardour," replied I; "but what should I do for the stage?"—"Write a good comedy," said he in a firm tone.—"Alas! Sir, how should I make portraits? I do not know faces." He smiled at this answer. "Well, then, write a tragedy." I answered that I was not quite so ignorant of the passions and the heart, and that I would willingly make the attempt. Thus passed my first interview with this illustrious man.

On leaving him, I went and took a lodging at three half-crowns a month, near the Sorbonne, at a cook's house in Rue des Maçons, where I had a tolerably good dinner for nine-pence. I used to reserve a part of it for my supper; and I lived well. However, my six guineas would not have gone very far. But I found an honest bookseller, who offered to buy the manuscript of my translation of *The Rape of the Lock*, and who gave me twelve guineas for it, but in promissory notes, and these notes were at long dates. A Gascon, whose acquaintance I had made at a coffee-house, discovered for me, in the street of St. André des Arts, a grocer, who consented to take my notes in payment, provided I would purchase goods of him to that amount. I bought twelve guineas worth of sugar of him; and, after having paid him, I entreated him to re-sell it for me. I lost but little by it; and with my six guineas of Montauban, and my eleven pounds fifteen shillings of my sugar, I was enabled to go on till the harvest of academic prizes, without borrowing of any one. Eight months of my board and lodging would only amount to eleven guineas and a half. I had therefore nearly six guineas left for my other expenses. This was quite enough; for, by keeping in bed, I should burn less wood in winter. I might therefore go on with my literary labours till Midsummer, without inquietude; and if I gained the prize at the academy, which was twenty guineas, I should get through the year. This calculation kept me in spirits.

I began by studying *the art of play writing*. Voltaire furnished me with books. Aristotle's art of poetry, P. Corneille's discourses on the three unities, his reflections, the Greek tragedians, our modern tragedies, were all eagerly and rapidly devoured. I longed to try my strength; and the first subject that my impatience seized on was the Portuguese revolution. On this I lost some precious time; the political interest of this event was too feeble for the stage; and still more feeble was the manner in which I hastily conceived and executed my project. However, some scenes, that I shewed to an intelligent player, made him augur well of me. But he said that the art of play-writing must be studied at the theatre, and he advised me to engage Voltaire to ask for a free admission for me. "Roselle is right," said Voltaire to me; "the theatre is the school for us all; it must be open to you; and I ought to have thought of it sooner." My free admission to the French theatre was liberally granted me: and I afterward never failed to go and take my lesson there. I cannot

express how much this assiduous study hastened the development and progress of my ideas, and of the little talent I possessed. I never returned from the representation of a tragedy without some reflections on the nature of the art, nor without some new degree of warmth in my imagination, my heart, and my style.

To draw beautiful tragic subjects from their source, it would have been necessary to dive into the study of history; and I should have had the courage to do this, but I had not time. I looked lightly over ancient history, and the subject of *Dionysius the Tyrant* having struck my fancy, I could not rest till the plan of it was formed, and all the springs of the action invented and arranged; but I said nothing of it to Voltaire; both that I might proceed alone, and without a guide, and that I might shew him my first effort with all the advantage of a finished work.

It was at this time that I met at his house the man whose society has, of all others, most charmed and delighted me; the good, the wise, the virtuous Vauvenargue. In his person he had been cruelly treated by nature, but his mind was one of her rarest works. I used to think I beheld in him Fenelon, infirm and suffering. He shewed me much kindness, and I easily obtained the permission to go and see him. I should make a good book of his conversations, if I were able to recollect them. Some traces of them may be seen in the collection he has left us of his thoughts and meditations. But, eloquent and feeling as he is in his writings, it seems to me that he was still more so in his conversations with us. I say *with us*, because I generally found with him a man who was wholly devoted to him, and who for that reason soon gained my esteem and my confidence. This man was Beauvin, the same who has since given to the stage the tragedy of the *Cherusians*, a man of sense and taste, but of an indolent disposition; devoted to pleasure, though almost as poor as myself.

As our sentiments for the Marquis of Vauvenargue so perfectly accorded, they established between us a kind of sympathy. We used to meet every evening after the play, at the Procope coffee-house, the tribunal of criticism, and the school for young poets, to study the humour and taste of the public. There we always conversed together; and, when there was no play, we passed our evenings in retired walks. Thus we became every day more necessary to each other, and every day felt more regret at separating. "And why should we separate?" said he to me at last: "why not live together? The green-grocer, at whose house I lodge, has a chamber to let: and by living at a common expense, we shall spend less." I answered that this arrangement would please me exceedingly; but that for the moment I could not think of it. He insisted and pressed me so strongly, that I was obliged to tell him why I refused. "In the house I now live," said I, "the exactness with which I have hitherto paid has necessarily acquired me a credit that I should not find elsewhere, and of which I may perhaps soon have occasion to make use." Beauvin, who had twelve or fifteen guineas, bade me be under no anxiety; that he could advance me money; and that he had a plan in his head to enrich us both:



On my part, I displayed to him my hopes and my resources; I shewed him the piece I had written for the prize of the academy; he thought it a bar of gold. I told him the plan, and read to him the first scenes of my tragedy: he answered for its success; and this was a mine of silver. The Marquis of Vauvenargue lived at the Hotel de Tours, in *Little Peacock-street*, and opposite this hotel was the house of Beauvin's green-grocer. Here, then, I lodge with him. His project of publishing between us a periodical review was not so good a thing as he expected: we had neither gall nor venom: and as this review was neither a faithless unjust criticism on good works, nor a bitter biting satire on good authors, it had but little sale. However, by means of these little profits, and the prize of the academy, that I had the good fortune to obtain, we went on till autumn, I ruminating on tragic verses, and he meditating on his intrigues.

He was ugly, bandy-legged, and already advanced in years; yet he was the favoured lover of a young Artésienne, of whom he talked to me every day, with the most tender regret; for he suffered the torment of absence, and I was the echo that answered to his sighs. Although much younger than he, I had other cares in my head. The keenest of my sorrows was the repugnance the cook had already shewn to trust us. The baker and the green-grocer consented to furnish us still, the one with bread, and the other with cheese: and these were our suppers. But, from day to day, we ran the risk of being without a dinner. I had one hope left me: Voltaire, who suspected that I was more proud than opulent, had desired that the little poem crowned by the academy might be printed for my benefit, and he had engaged a bookseller to allow me the profits of it, after deducting the expense of printing, &c. But whether it was that the bookseller had gained but little by it, or that he loved his own profit better than mine, he said that I had nothing to receive, and that at least half the edition was still left. "Well," said Voltaire, "give me what you have left, I'll dispose of it." He left Paris for Fontainebleau, where the court then was; and there, as the subject proposed by the academy was a panegyric on the king, Voltaire took upon himself to distribute this panegyric, appreciating the author's benefit at his will. It was on this sale that I reckoned, but without overvaluing it. But Voltaire did not return.

At length, such was our situation, that one evening Beauvin said to me, sighing, "My dear friend, all our resources are exhausted, we have not even enough left to pay the man who brings us water." I saw he was dejected; but I was not. "Do the baker and the green-grocer," asked I, "refuse us credit?"—"No, not yet," said he.—"Well then," replied I, "we are but where we were; it is very easy to manage without this man."—"How so?"—"How! why by going ourselves to fetch water from the fountain."—"Will you have the courage to do that?"—"Most certainly I will. And a fine courage it is! It is now quite dark; and were it light, where is the dishonour in serving one's self?" I then took the pitcher, and went boldly to fill it at the neighbouring fountain. On returning, my pitcher in my hand, I beheld

Beauvin coming to me with open arms, in an extasy of joy: "Look there, my dear friend, 'tis she! she's come! friends, relations, family, she has quitted all for me? Is this love?" Motionless with surprise, my pitcher still in my hand, I beheld a fine, tall, fresh girl, well made, pretty, though her nose was rather flat, curtseying to me without any embarrassment. The contrast, between this romantic incident and our situation made me suddenly burst into such a mad fit of laughter, that they were both dumb with astonishment. "You are heartily welcome, Mademoiselle; you could not," said I, "have chosen a happier moment, nor arrive more opportunely." After the first compliments were over, I went down to my green-grocer. "Madam," said I, gravely, "this is an extraordinary day, a day of joy and festivity: and you, if you please, must aid us to do the honours of the house, and enlarge a little the acute angle of cheese that you usually give us for supper." "And what's this woman come to do here?" inquired she.—"Ah! Madam," said I, "'tis a miracle, worked by love; and miracles are never explained. All that you and I should know of it is, that we shall want this evening one-third more of your excellent Brie cheese, for which we will very soon pay you, please heaven."—"Yes," said she, "please heaven! But when one has neither money nor credit, it is scarcely the time to think of love."

Voltaire, on his return from Fontainebleau, a few days afterward, filled my hat with crowns, saying that they were the produce of the sale of my poem. Although in my distress I should have been pardonable had I accepted aid, yet I took the liberty of representing to him that he had sold my little work too much above its value. But he made me understand that those who had so nobly paid it were persons from whom neither he nor I could refuse any thing. Some of Voltaire's enemies wanted to persuade me that this incident ought to separate us. I was not of that opinion: and with these crowns, which it would have been more unbecoming to refuse than to accept, I went and paid all my debts.

Beauvin had received some money from his family; I had nothing to receive from mine, and was again advancing to the end of my finances. It was, therefore, neither just nor possible, on account of his new way of living, that we should continue any longer together at a common expense.

In this conjuncture, one of the cruellest in my life, and in which, bathing my pillow every night with my tears, I regretted the comfort and tranquillity I had enjoyed at Toulouse, I know not what happy influence of fortune, or of the good opinion Voltaire gave of me, made a lady, whose memory I revere, desirous that I should undertake to complete the education of her grandson. Ah! in every way the remembrance of this event should be dear to my heart! What inestimable pleasures of society and friendship has it diffused over my life! and how many years of happiness has it made me enjoy!

A director of the India company, whose name was Gilly, engaged in a commercial speculation that at first enriched and afterward ruined him, was left a widower with two children, a son and daughter; and of these children his mother-in-law, Madame Ha-

renc, had kindly taken charge. It is impossible to imagine a woman advanced in age more amiable than Madame Harenc; and to this *amiability* she joined the most enlightened mind, the rarest prudence, and the most solid virtue. Her ugliness was, at first sight, repulsive; but all the charms of her wit and her heart soon pierced through this deformity, and made it, not forgotten, but loved. Madame Harenc had an only son, as ugly as herself, and as amiable. This son is M. de Presle, who, I believe, is still living, and who has long been distinguished by his taste and judgment among the lovers of the arts. Their society, perfectly well chosen, was remarkable for its intimacy, its security, its peaceful serenity mixed with gaiety, and the most perfect harmony of sentiment, taste, and opinion. A few ladies, always the same, and tenderly united, were its ornament. There was the beautiful Desfourniels; the regularity, the delicacy, the exquisite softness of whose features, the most skilful painters despaired of imitating; and to whom nature seemed to have delighted to give a soul suited to so divine a form: there was her sister, Madame de Valdec, as amiable, though less beautiful, than the thrice happy mother of that unfortunate de Lessart, whom we have seen murdered at Versailles, with the other Orleans prisoners. There was the young Desfourniels, since Countess of Chabillant, who, without having either the beauty or the heart of her mother, mixed with a little bitterness, so much engaging wit, that her vivacity was easily pardoned when it indulged in too keen a satire. Mademoiselle Lacombe, a maiden lady, the intimate friend of Madame Harenc, had, among these characters, a tone of sound and gentle reason that was conciliating to all. M. de Presle, curious about all literary novelties, made a choice collection of them, and gave us the first reading. M. de Lantage, in whose country house I had just been living, in this valley, and his elder brother, a man of talents, a passionate admirer of Rabelais, brought with them there the good taste of ancient gaiety. I will not forget, in speaking of this charming society, the good M. de l'Osiere, the most truly philosophic man I have ever known after M. de Vauvenargue, and who, by the contrast between the wisdom of his mind and the simple candour of his soul and language, used to bring to our minds *la Fontaine*.

To this house, then, I was invited, and I was soon cherished as one of the family. Judge of my happiness, when to so many comforts was added that of having for my pupil a young man perfectly well bred, of the purest innocence, of most excellent docility, and with intelligence and memory enough to lose nothing of what I taught him. He died before the age of manhood, and in him nature destroyed one of her most charming works. He was as beautiful as Apollo; and I never perceived that he suspected it. Whilst I was with him, without stealing from him any of the time or care that I owed to his studies, I completed my tragedy. That year I again obtained the prize of poetry; and I should reckon it among the most happy of my life, were it not for the grief into which I was plunged by the death of my mother. All the relief and all the consolations of which so deep a

sorrow was susceptible, were offered me by Madame Harenc. I left her when my pupil's father, choosing another kind of education for him, called him back to his home. But afterwards, and till the death of that respectable woman, she loved me tenderly; and her house was mine.

My tragedy was finished. It was time to submit it to the correction of Voltaire; but Voltaire was at Cirey. The wisest plan would have been to wait his return to Paris; and I felt it strongly. What advantage should I not have reaped from the observations, the criticism, the counsel of such a master! But, the more my work would have been improved by his review, the less would it have been my work. Perhaps too, by requiring of me more than my abilities could effect, he might have discouraged me. These reflections induced me to form my determination, and I went and asked the players to hear my piece read.

This reading was listened to with much kindness. The three first acts and the fifth were fully approved. But they did not hesitate to decide that the fourth was too feeble. I had at first conceived an idea for this fourth act, which afterward appeared to me too hazardous, and which I had given up. I discovered at this moment that, in wishing to be prudent, I had become cold; and my boldness recurred to me. I requested three days to correct my error, and a second hearing for the fourth day. I slept little in the interval; but I was well paid for this long watching, by the success that my new act obtained at the reading, and by the opinion that this prompt and happy composition gave of my talents. It was then that the vexations of an author began: and the first arose from the distribution of the parts.

When the performers were solicited for a free admission to the theatre for me, Mademoiselle Gaussin had been the most eager to favor me. It was she who played the parts of princesses: she excelled particularly in all the tender parts, and such as only required the simple expression of love and grief. Beautiful, and of the most touching kind of beauty, with a tone of voice that went to the heart, and a look that, when in tears, had an inexpressible charm, her simplicity, when well placed, arrested all criticism; and this verse that Orosmane addresses to Zaire,

" Art is not made for thee, thou need'st it not."

had been inspired by her. Hence it may be well conceived how dear she was to the public, and how secure of favor. But, in characters where majesty, force, and tragic passion were requisite, all her powers were too feeble; and that voluptuous softness, that accorded so well with tender parts, was quite contrary to the vigour which that of my heroine demanded. Yet Mademoiselle Gaussin had not dissembled her desire to play the part, which she expressed in the most flattering and most seducing manner, by affecting, at the two readings, the most lively interest both for the piece and for its author.

At that time, new tragedies were rare, and still more rare were the parts that were favourable to the success of the performer: but the most interesting motive with her was that of taking this

part from an actress who every day stole one from her. Never did the jealousy of talent inspire more hatred than the beautiful Gaussin bore the young Clairon. The latter had not the same charm in her face: but, in her, the features, the voice, the look, the action, and above all the dignity, the energy of character, all accorded to express violent passion and elevated sentiment. Since she had taken possession of the parts of Camille, Didon, Ariane, Roxane, Hermione, and Alzire, it had become necessary to resign them to her. Her acting was not yet so chaste nor so judicious as it afterward became: but it had already all the sap and vigour of great talent. In a character of force, dignity, and enthusiasm, such as that of Arétie, I could not hesitate between her and her rival; and in spite of all my repugnance to disoblige the one, I determined to offer it to the other. The indignation of Mademoiselle Gaussin could not contain itself. She said "that it was very well known by what species of seduction Mademoiselle Clairon had won this preference." She certainly was very wrong. But Mademoiselle Clairon became angry in her turn, and obliged me to follow her into the box of her rival; and there, without having told me what she was going to do: "Here, Mademoiselle," said she, "I bring him to you; and, to let you see whether I have seduced him, whether I have even solicited the preference he has given me, I declare to you, and I declare to him, that, if I accept the part, it shall only be from your hand." With these words she threw the manuscript on the toilet table in the box, and left me there.

I was then twenty-four, and I found myself *tête à tête* with the most beautiful woman in the world. Her trembling hands clasped mine, and I may say that her fine eyes were fixed like suppliants on mine. "What have I done to you," said she, with her sweet voice, "to deserve the humiliation and the grief you cause me? When M. de Voltaire requested for you a free admission to this theatre, it was I who spoke for you. When you read your tragedy, no one was more alive to its beauties than I. I listened attentively to the part of Arétie; and I was too much affected by it not to flatter myself that I should play it as I felt it. Why, then, deprive me of it? It belongs to me by the right of seniority, and perhaps by some other title. You do me an injury by giving it to any other; and I doubt whether you benefit yourself. Believe me, it is not the noise of laboured declamation that suits this character. Reflect well on it. My own success is dear to me; but yours is not less so; and it would be a grateful pleasure to me to have contributed to it."

I confess that the effort I made over myself was painful. My eyes, my ears, my heart, were exposed without defence to the sweetest of enchantments. Charmed by all my senses, moved to the bottom of my heart, I was just ready to yield, and fall at the knees of her who seemed disposed to receive me kindly there. But the fate of my work depended on it, my only hope, the well-being of my poor children: and the alternative of failure or complete success was so vividly present to my mind, that this interest prevailed over all the emotions with which I was agitated.

"Mademoiselle," said I, "were I so happy as to have written such a part as that of Andromaque, Iphigenie, Zaire, or Inis, I should throw myself at your feet, to pray you to embellish it still more. No one feels better than I, the charm that you add to the expression of touching sorrow, or of timid and tender love. But, unfortunately, the fable of my play is not suited to such a character: and, though the powers that this requires be less rare, less precious than the engaging simplicity which you possess, you will yourself allow that they are quite different. I shall one day perhaps have an occasion to employ with advantage the sweet accents of your voice, those enchanting looks, those eloquent tears, that divine beauty, in a part that is worthy of you. Leave the perils and risk of my first effort to her who is willing to run them; and, by reserving to yourself the honor of having resigned the character to her, avoid the dangers that, in playing it, you would yourself share with me."—"You have said enough," said she, disguising her displeasure. "It is you who request it; I yield it to her." Then taking the manuscript from her toilet-table, she went down with me, and, finding Mademoiselle Clairon in the green-room, "I restore to you," said she, with an ironical smile, "and I restore to you without regret, the part from which you expect such success and such glory. I am of your opinion, that it suits you better than me." Mademoiselle Clairon received it with modest dignity; and I, in silence, without daring to look up, waited the close of the scene. But in the evening, at supper, *tête à tête* with my actress, I breathed free from the embarrassment into which she had plunged me. She was not a little sensible to the constancy with which I had sustained this trial; and it was this incident that gave birth to that lasting friendship which has grown old with us.

This was not the only part that vexed me. The performer, to whom I destined that of Dionysius the father, Grandval, refused it, and would play only that of young Dionysius. I was therefore obliged to give the first to another performer, whose name was Ribou, much younger than Grandval. Ribou was handsome and well made, and, in his action, he did not want dignity; but he wanted intelligence and instruction, to such a degree, that it was necessary to explain his part to him in vulgar language, and to teach it him word by word, as to a child. However, by dint of pains and lessons, I made him play it passably, and, with a little disguise in his dress, he looked the character well enough not to destroy all theatrical illusion by his youth.

Now came the rehearsals. It was there the connoisseurs began to judge me. I have mentioned my fourth act, which I had at first thought too bold; it was this that awakened all the energy of the performers. The critical moment was that in which young Dionysius retains his mistress as a hostage in the palace of his father, in order to disarm the factions. Mademoiselle Clairon had heard it said that this was the rock on which the piece would strike, and that it would go no farther. She proposed to me to assemble at her house a few men of taste, whom she herself was in the habit of consulting, to read my piece to them, and, without

telling them our fears, to see what they would think of it; I submitted, as you may believe, and the council was assembled. It consisted of D'Argental, the tool of Voltaire, and the enemy of all promising talent: of the Abbé de Chauvelin, the denouncer of the Jesuits, and to whom that odious part gave some celebrity. It is of him that was said,

What is that grotesque uniformly thing?  
Is it a man? Is it a monkey?  
It speaks, &c.

There was the Count de Praslin, who, like D'Argental, lived but in the green-room, till the Duke de Choiseul, his cousin, gave the importance of an embassy to his inutility. The fourth was the despicable Marquis of Thibouville, distinguished among the infamous by the impudence with which he practised the filthiest of vices, and by the refinements of a luxury that disgusted by its effeminacy and its vanity. The only merit of this man, thus deep in shame, was that of reciting verses in a broken half-extinguished voice, and with an affectation that suited his morals.

How could such men have credit and authority at the theatre? By courting Voltaire, who did not enough despise the homage of those who were vilely devoted to him; and by persuading the little Duke d'Aumont that he could not conduct the government of the French theatre better than by following the advice of Voltaire's friends. My young actress had suffered herself to be imposed on by the air of consequence and wisdom that these gentlemen gave themselves; and I was struck with her respect for their talents. I read them my work; they listened with the gravest silence: and after the reading, Mademoiselle Clairon, having assured them of my docility, begged them to give me freely their opinion. They begged d'Argental to speak first: the way in which he used to give his opinion is notorious; half words, sentences half suppressed, indecisive phrases, vagueness and obscurity, were all that I could draw from him: and, gaping like a fish, he at length pronounced that we must see how it would be received. After him, M. de Praslin said that, indeed there were many things in this piece that deserved reflection, and, in a sententious tone, he advised me.....to think on them. The Abbé de Chauvelin, exalted on an arm chair, and dangling his little legs, assured me that they were sadly deceived who thought a tragedy was a thing so easy; that, to combine and compose the plan, the intrigue, the manners, the characters, the diction, was no child's play; that, for his own part, without judging my piece with rigour, he recognized in it the work of a young man; and that, for the rest, he referred to the opinion of M. d'Argental. Thibouville spoke in his turn, and, stroking his chin, that we might admire the brilliancy of his ring, said that he believed he knew something of tragic poetry: "He had recited so much, he had himself written so much, that he ought to be some judge. But how enter into such details after one single reading? He would only refer me to the models of the art: by naming them, he should clearly express what he wished me to understand; and that by reading Racine

and M. de Voltaire, it was easy to see in what style they had written."

Having listened with all possible attention, and heard nothing clear and precise on my work, it struck me that delicacy might have induced them to assume, in my presence, this insignificant language. "I leave you with these gentlemen," whispered I to my actress; "they will explain themselves better when I am gone." On seeing her again in the evening—"Well," said I, "did they speak more clearly of me in my absence than when I was present?" "Indeed," said she, laughing, "they spoke quite at their ease." "And what did they say?" "They said it was possible that this piece might succeed; but that it was also possible that it might fall. And all things considered, one answers for nothing, another dares not be too confident." "But did they make no particular observation?—On the subject for example?" ..... "Ah! the subject! that is the critical point. Yet who can say! The public are so fickle!" "And the action; what did they think of that?" "As for the action, Praslin does not know what to say of it; D'Argental does not know what to think of it; and the two others are of opinion that it must be judged of upon the stage." "Did they say nothing of the characters?" "They said that mine would be fine enough, if.....; that of Dionysius would also do well enough, but".....—"Well! *if, but?* and what followed?" "They looked at each other, and said nothing more." "And the fourth act, what thought they of that?" "Oh! as for the fourth act, its fate is decided; it will either fall or be applauded to the skies." "Well," cried I with vivacity, "I accept the presage; and it depends on you, Mademoiselle, to determine the prediction in my favour." "How so?" "Thus. At the moment when young Dionysius opposes your deliverance, if you see the public rising against this effort of virtue, do not leave them time to murmur, but pressing the reply, pronounce boldly these verses:

Go, fear nothing, &c.

The actress understood me, and it will soon be seen that she surpassed my hopes.

During the rehearsals of my piece, I met with an adventure which I have told to my children, but which I have an inclination to retrace to them. I had left Toulouse more than two years, and had paid but one year of my brother's schooling at the Irish seminary. I now owed a whole year, and with great economy I had reserved my twelve guineas to pay it. But I wanted to send them to their destination securely and without expense. Boubéc, an attorney at Toulouse, and an academician of the Floral Games, was then at Paris: I called on him, and, in the presence of a man decorated with the red ribbon, whom I did not know, I asked him if he had any safe mode of conveying my money. He told me he had none. "Ah! zounds!" cried the other, whom I took for an officer, and who was but a sharper, "why is it not Mr. Marmontel that I have the pleasure of meeting here? He does not know his Toulouse friends." I confessed, with confusion, that I did not know to whom I had the honour of speaking. "What,



not know the Chevalier d'Ambelot, who used to applaud you so heartily when you received the academic prizes? Well! notwithstanding this ingratitude, I'll render you the little service of transmitting your twelve guineas to the Irish seminary. Give me your address. You shall receive from me, to-morrow morning, a draft for that sum, payable at sight; and, when the superior informs you that he has received the money, you shall remit it to me here at your leisure." Nothing could be more obliging: and I thanked him heartily for his readiness to serve me.

The conversation then turning gaily on Toulouse, and I praising the engaging originality of mind that marks the people: "I am sorry," said Boubéc, "that you, who frequent the courts, were not present when I pleaded the cause of the town-hall painter. You know Cammas, who is so ugly and so foolish, and who every year daubs at the capitol the portraits of the new capitouls. A strumpet of the neighbourhood accused him of having seduced her. She was with child; and she demanded that he should marry her, or that he should pay the damages of a virginity that she had resigned to pillage these fifteen years. The poor devil was miserable. He came and related his misfortune to me. He swore to me that it was she who had corrupted him; he even wanted to explain to the judges how she had done it, and offered to make a picture of it that he would expose at the trial. "Hold your peace," said I to him; "with that great nose of yours, it becomes you well to play the young lad, who has been seduced! I'll plead your cause, and I'll gain it, if you promise to sit quietly by me at the trial, and not interrupt me whatever I may say; you understand me; otherwise you will be cast." He promised me all I desired. The day came; and the cause being called over, I suffered my adversary to declaim amply on the modesty, the weakness, and the frailty of the fair sex, and on the artifices and snares that were contrived to entrap them. After which I began my reply: "I plead," said I, "for an ugly man, I plead for a poor man, I plead for a fool. (He would fain have murmured, but I bade him be silent.) For an ugly man, gentlemen, look at him: for a man worth nothing, gentlemen, he is a painter, and, what is worse, the town painter: for a fool, let the court have the goodness to interrogate him. These three great truths once established, I reason thus: One can only seduce by money, wit, or beauty. Now, my client could not seduce by money, since he is worth nothing; neither by wit, since he is a fool; nor by beauty, since he is so ugly, nay, the ugliest of men: whence I conclude that he is falsely accused. My conclusions were admitted, and I gained my cause with few words."

I promised Boubéc not to forget a word of so fine a specimen of pleading, and when I went away, I again thanked the Chevalier d'Ambelot for the service he was going to render me. The next day, a tall footman, his hat bordered with broad Spanish lace, brought me the draft, which I instantly sent off.

Three days afterward, in passing one morning along the Rue du Théâtre François, I heard some one call me from a second floor. It was a Languedocian, Favier, a man since well known,

"here is a draft payable at sight, which, I trust, is worth more than that of your chevalier;" and when I talked of returning her the money: "Dionysius," said she, "is the debtor; I'll engage he will discharge it."

I was now only anxious about the fate of my tragedy, and that was quite enough. It was an event of such importance to me, that I hope I shall be pardoned the moments of weakness with which I am going to accuse myself. At that time the author of a new piece had for himself and his friends a little grated box in the third circle, over the stage, the seat of which, I may indeed say, was a true faggot of thorns. Thither I went, about half an hour before the curtain drew up: and till then I preserved force enough to support my anguish. But, at the noise the curtain made as it rose, my blood froze within my veins. Spirits were applied in vain to restore me; I could not recover. It was not till the end of the first monologue, amidst long reiterated plaudits, that I began to revive. From that moment all went off well, gradually gaining on the public favour, till the scene in the fourth act, with which I had been so much threatened. But, as this moment approached, I was seized with such a trembling, that, without exaggeration, my teeth chattered in my mouth. If the great revolutions that pass in the soul and in the senses were mortal, I should have died under that I suffered when the sublime Clairon, so happily catching the feelings of the spectators, pronounced these verses:

Go, fear nothing, &c. —

And the whole theatre resounded with redoubled plaudits. Never did any one pass from more lively apprehensions to more sudden and more sensible joy; and, during the rest of the play, this last sentiment agitated my heart and soul with such violence, that my respiration was but sobbing.

As the curtain fell, amidst the plaudits and acclamations of the pit, who loudly called for me, my friends came to tell me that I must go down and shew myself on the stage. This is now a constant custom in the French theatres; it was impossible for me to crawl thither alone: my knees bent under me; I was obliged to be supported.

*Merope* had been the first piece at which the author had been called for, and *Dionysius* was the second. What is since become so common, and so little flattering, was then still honourable, and at the three first representations this honour was granted me; but this extravagant success arose from circumstances that raised excessively the merit of my tragedy. Crébillon was old, Voltaire was declining; no young man offered to replace them. I seemed to fall from the clouds: this first effort of a country youth, of a Limosin of twenty-four, appeared to promise wonders; and in pleasures the public always delight to exaggerate its hopes. But wo to him who deceives them. Reflection soon taught me this; and the critics were eager to warn me of it. However, I had some days of pure and calm happiness, such as that I enjoyed most gratefully at Madame Harenc's supper. Mr. de Preste took

me there after the play. His good mother, who expected me, received me in her arms; and when she heard of my fortune, she bathed me with her tears. So tender a reception recalled to me my mother; and instantly, a tide of bitterness mixing with my joy: "Ah! madame," said I to her, melting into tears, "that tender mother of whom you remind me, why is she not still living! She too would embrace me, and she would be so happy!" Our friends arrived, thinking they had only to congratulate me. "Come," said Madame Harenc to them, "console this poor youth. See, he is lamenting his mother, who, he says, would have been so happy in this moment!"

This return of grief was only transient; and the friendship that smiled around me soon possessed all my soul. Ah! if in adversity it be a comfort to communicate our pains, it is in prosperity a most vivid and most exquisite delight to find hearts that share it with us! I have always found it more easy to suffice for myself in grief than in joy. When my heart is sad, it loves to be alone. It is to be happy with me, that I want my friends.

When the fate of my piece was decided, I sent it to Voltaire, and begged him, at the same time, to permit me to dedicate it to him. It may be seen, in the collection of his letters, with what satisfaction he learnt my success, and with what kindness he accepted my homage.

The same year in which I had the misfortune to lose my mother, Vauvenargue died; I wanted to relieve the sorrows that oppressed me; and in my epistle to Voltaire it was a tender pleasure to express them. This epistle was written with more rapidity than any of my works. Verses seemed to flow from their source: I finished it in one evening: and it has not been altered since.

Voltaire's prediction was verified. In one day, almost in one instant, I found myself rich and celebrated. I made a suitable use of my riches; it was not so with my celebrity. My fame became the cause of my dissipation, and the source of my errors. Till then my life had been obscure and retired. I lodged in Rue des Mathurins with two studious men, Larivotte and the Abbé de Prades; one occupied in translating the mathematical works of Maclaurin, and the other Huet's theology. There also lived with us two Gascon abbés, charming idlers, and of inexhaustible gaiety, who ran about in pursuit of pleasure while we were occupied with our studies; and who returned in an evening to amuse us with the news they had collected, or the tales they had invented. The houses that I used to frequent were those of Madame Harenc and Madame Desfourniels, her friend, where I was always welcome: that of Voltaire, where I enjoyed with rapture the conversation of my illustrious master, and that of Madame Denis, his niece, whose amiable manners compensates for her want of beauty. This lady's capacious mind, had caught the tint of that of her uncle; his taste, his gaiety, his exquisite politeness, were visibly traced in her, and made her society sought and admired. All these intimacies contributed to fill my soul and my mind with courage and emulation, and to infuse more warmth and more genius into my works.

Above all, what a school for me had that been, where every day, for two years, the friendship of the two most enlightened men of their age had permitted me to go and instruct myself! The conversation of Voltaire and Vauvenargue presented such richness and fertility as can never be excelled. Voltaire, with an inexhaustible mine of interesting facts and strokes of genius; Vauvenargue, with an eloquence full of amenity, grace and wisdom. Never was debate distinguished by so much talent, gentleness, and good faith: and what charmed me yet more was, on one side, the respect of Vauvenargue for the genius of Voltaire, and, on the other, the tender veneration of Voltaire for the virtue of Vauvenargue: both, without flattering each other by vain adulation or faint complaisance, honoured themselves, in my estimation, by a freedom of thought which never troubled the harmony and accord of their mutual sentiments. But, at the moment of which I am speaking, one of these two illustrious friends was no more, and the other was absent. I was too much abandoned to myself.

After the success of *Dionysius*, an infinity of curious, seducing, and frivolous people seized on me, and I saw myself borne away in the vortex of Paris. It was a kind of fashion to invite and shew the author of the new piece; and I, flattered by this lively interest, could not refuse it. Every day invited to dinners, to suppers where the master and his company were equally new to me, I suffered myself to be carried from one party to another, without knowing, very often, whither I was going, or where I had been. So fatigued was I with the perpetual mobility of this ceremony, that in my leisure moments I had no force to apply to any thing; yet this variety, this change of scene pleased me, I confess: and my friends themselves, while they recommended to me prudence and modesty, thought that I ought to yield to this first desire of seeing me. "If not friendship," said they, "you will acquire favour and personal esteem. You want to know the manners, the taste, the tone and usages of the world; it is only by seeing it near that it can be well studied; and you are happy in being so favourably and so early introduced to it."

My friends were right, had I prudently known how to profit of this advantage: but an extreme facility was the fault of my youth; and when opportunity and pleasure united, I never could resist them.

During this time of dissipation and folly, a Mr. Monet called on me, who has since been director of the comic opera, and whom I did not know. "Sir," said he to me, "I am charged with a commission to you that, I think, will not displease you. You have surely heard of Mademoiselle Navarre?" I answered that the name was new to me: "she is," continued Monet, "the prodigy of our age for wit and beauty. She comes from Brussels, where she has been the delight and ornament of the court of Marshal Saxe: she has seen *Dionysius the tyrant*; she is ardently desirous of knowing its author, and sends me to invite you to dine with her to-day." I readily engaged myself.

I never have been so dazzled as I was on seeing her. She had still more brilliancy than beauty. She was in a Polish dress, most

graceful and genteel, two long tresses fell on her shoulders, and on her head jonquil flowers, mixed with her hair, heightened marvellously the lustre of her fine clear brown complexion, which was animated by the fire of two sparkling eyes. The reception she gave me redoubled the danger of seeing so many charms so near; and her language soon confirmed the eulogy that had been made of her wit. Ah! my children! if I could have foreseen all the vexation that this day was to cause me, with what horror should I have started back and saved myself from the danger I was about to run! These are no fables; 'tis the example of your father teaching you to dread the most seducing of the passions.

Among the company that my enchantress had invited on that day, I found men of taste and talent. The dinner was brilliant. Gallantry and gaiety were freely indulged, but not abused. Mademoiselle Navarre knew how to hold the reins of liberty with a light hand. She knew too how to measure her attentions; and till the dinner was nearly over, no one could complain; but they were insensibly fixed on me in so marked a manner, and when we were walking in the garden she so clearly shewed her inclination to be alone with me, that the whole company, one by one, silently stole away. While they were thus slipping from us, her dancing master came. I saw her take her lesson. The dance she danced was then known by the name of *the lovely conqueror*. She displayed in it all the graces of an elegant figure, with gestures, steps and attitudes, now dignified, and now full of softness and voluptuousness. The lesson scarcely occupied a quarter of an hour, and Lanny was dismissed. Then, humming the air she had danced, Mademoiselle Navarre asked me if I knew the words of it? I knew them; they began thus:

Aimable vainqueur,  
Fier tyran d'un coeur!  
Amour, dont l'empire  
Et le martyre  
Sont plein de douceur.

"And if I did not know the words," said I, "I should invent them; so happily is this moment suited to inspire them." A conversation that began thus could not soon end. We passed the evening together, and in some tranquil moments she inquired about what new work I was occupied. I told her the subject, and explained to her the plan of it. But I complained of the involuntary dissipation into which I was forced. "Do you wish," said she, "to study in peace, at your ease, and without distraction? Come and pass a few months with me in Champagne, at the village of Avenay, where my father has a house and some vineyards. He is at Brussels, at the head of a mercantile house that he cannot quit, and I am come to transact some business for him. I set off to-morrow for Avenay; I shall be alone there till after the vintage: as soon as I shall have prepared every thing to receive you, come and join me there. It will be hard, indeed, if with me and excellent champagne you cannot make charming verses." What reason, what prudence, what force could I oppose to the irresistible charm of such an invitation? I promised to set off at

the first signal she should give me. She required my most sacred promise to have no confidant. She had the strongest reasons, she said, for concealing our acquaintance.

From the time of her departure to mine for Avenay, there was an interval of two months; and though it was filled by a diligent and very animated correspondence, all that in absence could most strongly interest the mind and the soul, that did not save me from anxious weariness. The letters I received, inspired by a lively and brilliant imagination, while they exalted mine by the sweetest illusions, only made me desire more ardently to see her again, who, even in absence, caused me such ecstasy. I employed this time in dissolving a great number of the acquaintances I had formed: telling some that my new work required retirement, and pretending to others that I was going to visit my native province. Without explaining myself to Madame Harenc and to Mademoiselle Clairon, I prevented their anxiety: but fearing the curiosity and penetration of Madame Denis, I was totally silent to her on my project of evasion. It was waong, I confess. Her friendship for me had not waited my success to declare itself. Unknown in the world, I was received at her house as cordially as at her uncle's. Nothing was neglected that could render my visits agreeable to me. My friends were received there; they were become her's. My old friend, the Abbé Raynal, recollects with me the entertaining suppers we there enjoyed. The Abbé Mignot, her brother, the good Cideville, and my two Gascon abbés of Mathurins-street, brought with them a frank gaiety; and I may say, that I, then young and jovial, used, at these suppers, to be the hero of the table. My spirits had there the extravagance of madness. The lady and her company were scarcely more prudent, or less merry than myself; and when Voltaire could escape from the bonds of his Marchioness Duchâtelet, and from his suppers with the great, he was too happy to come and laugh heartily with us. Ah! why did this gentle, peaceful, equal, unalterable happiness, not satisfy my desires? What other relief could I want, after a long day of labour and study? And what could I expect to find in that dangerous Avenay?

The letter, so desired, so impatiently expected, the letter that should call me from Paris, at length arrived. I had then lodgings by myself near the Louvre. No longer obliged to limit so severely the expenses of my table, I had separated from the companions with whom I lived, and kept an old woman at five shillings a month, and a barber at the same price. To the latter I confided the care of finding me a courier from the letter office, who would take me and my portmanteau as far as Rheims in his cabriolet. The bargain was made, the place fixed, and I set off: from Rheims to Avenay I went on a post-horse, and though it be said that love has wings, he really had none for me. I found myself shaken to pieces when I arrived.

Here, my children, I throw a veil over my deplorable folly. Although the time be distant, and though I was then very young, I will not appear before you in a state of intoxication and madness.

But what you ought to know is, that the faithless caresses with which I was covered were mixed with most frightful ills; that the most seducing of women was at the same time the most capricious; that, among her enchantments, her coquetry invented, at every instant, some new means of exercising her empire over me; that at every moment her will changed, and that every moment mine was forced to submit to it; that she seemed to delight to make me, by turns, the happiest lover, and the most unhappy slave: we were alone, and she had the art of troubling our solitude by unforeseen incidents. The mobility of her nerves, the singular vivacity of her spirits, made her subject to hysterics, that would alone have been my torment: when she was most brilliant in gaiety and health, these fits would seize her with bursts of involuntary laughter; to this laughter succeeded a torsion of all her members, trembling, and convulsive motions, that terminated in tears. These attacks were more painful to me than to herself; but they made her yet more dear and more interesting to me; happy if her caprices had not occupied her gayer intervals! *Tête-à-tête*, surrounded by the vineyards of Champagne, what means did she not invent to afflict and torture me! That was her study, that was her talent. Every day she imagined some new trial for my soul: it was a romance that she composed in action, and whose scenes she introduced.

The nuns of the village refused to admit her into their garden; this to her was an odious and insupportable privation; every other walk was to her insipid. I had to scale with her the walls of the forbidden garden; the guard came with his gun to beg us to go out; she did not mind him: he levelled his piece at me; she observed my countenance: I went up to him, and boldly slipped half-a-crown into his hand, but without her perceiving it, for she would have taken it for a mark of weakness. She at last thought it better to comply, and we retired without noise, but in good order, and with slow steps.

Another time she came with an air of inquietude, holding in her hand the letter, true or fabricated, of an unfortunate lover, jealous and furious at my happiness, and who threatened to revenge on me the contempt with which she treated him. As she shewed me this letter, she looked to see whether I read it coolly; for she esteemed nothing so much as courage; and had I appeared agitated, I should have been lost in her opinion.

As soon as I was escaped from one trial she invented others, and left me no time to breathe: but the most critical situation into which she threw me was this. Her father having learnt that she had a young man with her, had written to reproach her with it. She exaggerated to me his indignation; she represented herself as wholly lost, and her father as hastening to drive us from our retreat; she said there was but one way of appeasing him, and that this depended on me; but that she would die rather than indicate it: it was my affection for her that should dictate it to me. I understood her perfectly; but though with her, love made me forget the world, I had not forgotten myself. I adored her as my mistress, but had no inclination to make her my wife. I wrote to

M. Navarre ; my letter was filled with the praises of his daughter, and expressed for her the purest esteem and most innocent friendship. I went no farther. The good man answered, that if my intentions were honourable (as she had apparently made him understand) there was no sacrifice that he was not disposed to make for our happiness. I replied, insisting on my esteem, my friendship, and the praises of his daughter. I glanced lightly over the rest. I have reason to think she was dissatisfied with it; and, either to revenge herself for my refusal of her hand, or to know what would be the character of my love, in a fit of jealousy, she chose to pierce my heart with the most keen and most pointed dart. In one of those moments when I could but think her wholly occupied with thoughts of me, as I with her, the name she pronounced was the name of my rival, of that rival with whose jealousy she had threatened me. I heard from her mouth :—*Ah ! my dear \* \* \** Figure to yourself, if possible, the transport of passion that seized me ; I went out desperate, and calling loudly for her servants, ordered post-horses instantly. But I had scarcely locked myself in my room, to prepare for my departure, when she came dishevelled, and knocking at my door, with piercing cries and frightful violence, till she forced me to open it. Assuredly, if she only wished to behold in me a distracted wretch, she must have triumphed ; but, alarmed at the state in which she saw me, I beheld her, in her turn, disconsolate and dismayed, throw herself at my feet, and ask my pardon for an error of which, she said, her tongue only was guilty, and to which neither her fancy nor her heart had consented. How this scene was acted ! it seems incredible ; and I was then very far from suspecting it. But the more I have reflected since on the inconceivable singularity of this romantic character, the more I have found it possible, that she was desirous of seeing me in this new situation, and that afterward, touched with the violence of my grief, she wanted to moderate it. At least, it is true that I never saw her so sensible, nor so beautiful as in this horrible moment. Thus, after remaining some time inexorable, I suffered myself at last to be persuaded, and yielded to her. But, a few days afterward, her father having recalled her to Brussels, we were forced to separate. Our parting words were promises to love each other for ever ; and, with the hope of seeing her soon again, I left her and returned to Paris.

The cause of my flight was no longer a mystery : a ballad-making poet, the Abbé de Lattaignant, canon of Rheims, where he then was, having learned this adventure, had made it the subject of an epistle to Mademoiselle Navarre, and this epistle was handed about Paris. I returned then with the reputation of a man of *intrigue*, which I should have been well contented not to have had, for it excited jealousy, and made me enemies.

The day after my arrival, my two Gascon abbés of Mathurins-street, called on me, and gave me a kind of serio-comic admonition. “ Where do you come from ? ” said the Abbé Forest. “ A pretty conduct this ! you run away like a thief, without saying a parting word to your best friends ! You fly down into Champagne ! Every corner is hunted, and hunted in vain ! Where is



he? no one knows. And that interesting, feeling woman, whom you abandon, leaving her in affright and tears! What cruelty! Oh! you are a sad libertine, you don't deserve the love she bears you." "Who," said I, "is this *Ariane* in tears? who are you talking of?" "Who?" replied the Abbé Debon, "why that disconsolate woman who has supposed you drowned, who has searched for you even in the nets of Saint Cloud, and who has since discovered that you had betrayed her; in short, Madame Denis." "Gentlemen," said I to them, in a firm tone, and with a serious air, "Madame Denis is my friend, and nothing more. She has not the right to complain of my conduct. I made a mystery of it to her, as well as to you, because I was bound so to do." "Yes, a pretty mystery!" replied Forest, "for a Mademoiselle Navarre, a....." I interrupted him; "Softly, Sir," said I: "I believe you have no intention to offend me; and you will offend me, if you proceed farther in that tone. I never took the liberty of reproving you; and I beg you will not think of chiding me."—"This is all very well," said Forest; "You talk of it very much at your ease! You steal away cleverly into Champagne, to drink the best wine in the world with a charming girl; and we, 'tis we who suffer here. We are accused of being your confidants, your approvers, your accomplices. Madame Denis herself looks on us with a suspicious eye, receives us coldly; in short, if you must know, there are no more suppers at her house: the poor woman is in mourning." "Ah! I understand you: this, then," said I, "is the great crime of my absence. I assure you I am no longer surprised at your being so angry. No more suppers! Well, they shall be renewed. To-morrow you shall be invited".....Joy smiled on their faces. "Do you expect to be pardoned then?" said one. "Oh! yes," said the other, "she is so good a woman; he will soon make his peace." "The peace of friendship," I replied, "is never difficult to make: it is not the same with that of love: and to prove that love has no concern in this dispute is, that to-morrow there shall be no trace of it left. I must leave you. I am going to Madame Denis."

She received me with a little ill-humour, and complained of the inquietude that my flight had caused her, as well as all my friends. I bore her reproof, and confessed that at my age one was not exempt from weakness and folly. As to the secrecy of my journey, it had been enjoined me; I could not betray it. "Let me intreat you, Madame," said I, "not to appear offended; you will be thought jealous, and that's a report that should be contradicted rather than authorised." "Contradicted!" said she; "Is it possible that the report has been spread?" "Not yet," said I; "but those who used to unite here, and who are now dispersed, may soon make it current. I have just seen two of them this morning, who have loaded me with reproaches; and who, because your suppers are interrupted, believe you are in despair." I told her what had passed: she laughed with me, and felt that it would be better to invite them as soon as possible, to destroy the idea of an *Ariane in tears*. "This," said I to her, "is friendship: facile, indulgent, and peaceful; it suffers no change, it affords content,

joy, and concord through life : whereas love,"....." love !" cried she, " heaven guard me from it ! It is good only in tragedy, and it is comedy that suits me. You, Sir, who should know how to express the torments, the fury, the transports of tragic love, may well want some lessons to aid the fancy ; and I am told that for that purpose you could not have made a better choice. I congratulate you."

Alas ! yes, I then knew, by fatal experience, how truly the passion of love, even when it is thought happy, is a state of vexation and violence. But till then I had known only its lightest pains ; it reserved for me a much longer and more cruel torment !

The first letter I received from Mademoiselle Navarre was lively and tender. The second was still tender, but less lively. The third made me wait, and shewed but the pale embers of a dying fire. I complained, and my complaint was answered by light excuses : " Balls, plays, parties," were the causes alleged for this neglect and coldness. " I ought to know women : amusement and dissipation had such charms for them, that they must be permitted, at least in absence, to indulge in them." Then it was that I began to feel the real torments of love. To three burning, heart-rending letters, no answer. I at first thought this silence so incomprehensible, that, after the postman had passed, and had said to me these afflicting words, *there is nothing for you*. I went to the post myself, to see whether some letter directed to me had not been left in the office ; and after having been there, I returned again. In this continual expectation, every day deceived, I wasted and pined away. I consumed myself with grief.

I have forgot to say, that on my arrival at Paris, in passing by the cloister St. Germain-l'Auxerrois, an old picture of Cleopatra, having struck me with its resemblance to Mademoiselle Navarre, I had instantly bought it, and carried it home. It was my only consolation. I shut myself up alone with this picture, and addressing to it my sighs. I demanded, for pity's sake, one line to restore me to life. Senseless madman ! How could this image hear me ? She, whom it resembled, did not deign to listen. This excess of rigour and contempt was not natural. I fancied her sick or confined by her father, and kept a close prisoner like a criminal. All seemed to me possible and probable, except the frightful truth.

I had not been able to conceal my grief so effectually from Mademoiselle Clairon as to elude her inquiries. I confessed to her its cause ; and she did all she could imagine to flatter and allay it. One evening, when we were in the green-room at the theatre, she heard the Marquis of Brancas-Cerest tell some one that he had just arrived from Brussels. " Marquis," said she to him, " may I ask if you saw Mademoiselle Navarre there ? " " Yes," said he, " I saw her more beautiful and more brilliant than ever, leading, chained to her car, the Chevalier de Mirabeau, with whom she is in love, and who adores her." I was present ; I heard his answer. My heart bruised with the blow, I staggered home like a sacrificed victim. " Ah ! my children, what madness was it to believe in the fidelity of a woman already celebrated by her

frailty, and for whom pleasure had such a charm, that modesty was forgotten!"

However, less libertine than romantic, she appeared to have changed her manners in her amours with the Chevalier de Mirabeau. But the romance was not long; and it finished wretchedly.

The fever, that had seized me the same evening that I learned my misfortune, still confined me, when I one morning saw a handsome young man, who was unknown to me, enter my room, and who announced himself as the Chevalier de Mirabeau. "Sir," said he, "I have the honour to present myself to you in two characters: first, as the intimate friend of your friend, the late Marquis de Vauvenargue, my ancient comrade in the king's regiment. I should be proud to deserve the place he occupied in your heart; and I wish to obtain it. My other character is not so favourable to me. It is that of your successor in the favour of Mademoiselle Navarre. I can, and ought to testify, that she has the tenderest esteem for you. I have myself often been jealous of the manner in which she spoke of you; and what she most expressly recommended to me, when I left Brussels, was, to call on you, and intimate your friendship."

"Sir," said I, "you see me sick; it is you who have made me so; and I confess I do not feel disposed to regard so suddenly as my friend, the man who has done me such an injury. But the noble, loyal, and frank manner in which you announce yourself commands my esteem; and, since I am sacrificed, it is at least a consolation to me to be so to a man like you. Have the kindness to take a chair. We'll talk of our friend, M. de Vauvenargue; we'll talk too of Mademoiselle Navarre; and I shall speak only in praise of both."

After this conversation, which was long and interesting, "Sir," said he, "I flatter myself that you will not be offended to learn, that Mademoiselle Navarre has shewn me your letters. Here they are; they do as much honour to your heart as to your mind. In returning them to you, on her part, I am commissioned to receive hers." "Sir," asked I, "has she not had the kindness to write one word to authorise me to remit them to you?" "No," said he; "she thought, with me, that you would not refuse to believe me on my honour." "Excuse me," answered I; "as to what concerns myself, I may give my confidence; I then dispose only of what is mine; but, the secret of another, I do not dispose of in the same way. Yet, there is a method of conciliating all; and you will be satisfied." Then, taking from my writing-desk the packet of Mademoiselle Navarre's letters, "You recognise her hand-writing; and you see," said I, "that I take nothing away from this collection; you shall witness to her, that these letters of hers have been burnt." I instantly threw them into the fire with mine, and, whilst they were burning together, "My duty is fulfilled," added I; "my sacrifice is consummated." He approved my delicacy, and retired satisfied.

The fever did not leave me; I was melancholy; I would no longer see any one. I felt the necessity of breathing a purer air than that in the neighbourhood of the Louvre; I thought a soli-

tary walk might contribute to my recovery, and I went and lodged near the Luxembourg.

It was there that, still sick, in my bed, in the absence of the Savoyard who waited on me, I one morning heard some one enter my chamber. "Who's there?" I heard no answer; my curtains were drawn half open, and, in the dark, I found myself embraced by a woman, whose face, leaning over mine, bathed me with her tears. "Who are you, asked I again; but, without answering me, her embraces, her sighs, and her tears redoubled. At length she rose, and I beheld Mademoiselle Navarre, in a morning undress, more beautiful than ever in her grief and in her tears. "Is it you, Mademoiselle?" exclaimed I, "Alas! who brings you here? will you tear me from the little hold I have on life?" As I said this, I perceived behind her the Chevalier de Mirabeau, mute and motionless. I thought it the dream of madness; but she, turning to him with a tragic air, said, "Look, Sir, look what I sacrifice to you: the most passionate lover, the most faithful, the tenderest and best friend I had in the world; see to what a state my love for you has reduced him, and how culpable would you be if you ever rendered yourself unworthy of such a sacrifice." The Chevalier was petrified with astonishment and admiration. "Are you able to get up?" said she to me. "Yes," said I. "Well, get up then, and give us breakfast; for we wish you to be our adviser, and we have things of great importance to communicate to you."

I arose, and as soon as my Savoyard came, I sent for some coffee. When we were left alone—"My dear friend," said she, "the Chevalier and I are going to consecrate our love at the foot of the altar: we mean to marry, not in France, where we should have many difficulties to conquer, but in Holland, where we shall be free. Mareschal Saxe is furious with jealousy. Here's the letter he wrote to me. The Chevalier is treated contemptuously in it: but he knows how to do himself justice." I represented to her that a jealous rival was not obliged to be just towards his rival, and that it would be scarcely prudent or possible to attack Mareschal Saxe. "What do you call attacking?" replied she; "in duel! with the sword? 'Tis not that; I have not made myself understood. M. le Chevalier, after his marriage, engages in the service of some foreign power: he is known, and can choose. With his name, his valour, his talents and that face, he will make a rapid progress: he will soon be seen at the head of the armies, and 'tis on the field of battle that he will contend with the Mareschal." "Very well, Mademoiselle," exclaimed I, "this now is what I approve, and I recognize you both in so generous a project." I saw them indeed as proud and as pleased with their resolution as if it had been to be executed on the next day. I learnt afterwards that, after having been married in Holland, they had gone to Avignon; that the brother of the Chevalier, the pretended friend of mankind, and the enemy of his brother, had made sufficient interest to have him pursued even into the states of the pope; that, at the moment when the sbirri, by order of the vice-legat, came to arrest him, his wife was in child-bed; and that, on see-

ing them enter her room, she was seized with such terror, that it created a sudden revolution in her frame, and terminated in her death.

I wept over her memory ; and from that time, this friend of mankind, whom I have known for a hypocrite in morality, and an intriguer at court, full of hatred, haughty and malicious, has been the object of my aversion. I cannot express the sudden change that took place in me when I had learnt that the Chevalier de Mirabeau loved Mademoiselle Navarre so much as to make her his wife. Cured of my love, and above all of my jealousy, I thought the preference she gave to him just, and far from being humiliated by it, I applauded myself for having resigned her to him. I here recognized how much the sentiment of self-love and wounded vanity embittered the vexations and the pains of love.

Yet there was still left at the bottom of my heart, a discomfort, an inquietude, a weary inactivity that governed me. This picture of Cleopatra, that was still before my eyes, had lost its resemblance ; it no longer touched me, but it importuned me : and I got rid of it. What redoubled my sadness was the loss of my talents. Among the charms and torments of Avenay, I had some hours of poetic fancy to give to study : Mademoiselle Navarre herself encouraged me to it. In fearful storms, as she was afraid of thunder, we had to dine or sup in her cellars (which were those of the Mareschal), and, amid fifty thousand bottles of champagne, it was difficult not to warm the imagination. It is most true, that, on those days, my verses were vapid : but reflection dissipated these vapours. As I advanced, I read my new scenes to her. To judge them she used to seat herself on what she called her throne : it was a little grass mount, at the top of the vineyards, surrounded by bramble-bushes ; and the description of this throne, that she said awaited us, should be seen in her letters : that of Armida had nothing more enchanting. It was there that I read my verses at her feet, and when she approved them, I thought them incomparable. But, when the charm was broken, and I saw myself alone in the world, instead of flowers with which the paths of poetry were strewed for me, I perceived only thorns. I was abandoned by the genius that had inspired me ! my mind and soul fell faint and languishing, like the sails of a vessel that suddenly lose the wind that filled them.

Mademoiselle Clairon, who saw the languor into which I had fallen, was eager to find its remedy. " My dear friend," said she, " your heart has need of love, and this weary anxiety is but want of love : this heart must be occupied, must be filled. Is there then but one woman in the world who can be lovely in your eyes ? " " I know but one only," said I, " who could console me, if she were inclined ; could she but be so generous as to feel this inclination ? "—" This is what we must know," replied she with a smile. " Is she of my acquaintance ? I'll aid you if I can."—" Yes, you know her, and have much influence over her."—" Well ! name her ; I'll speak for you. I'll tell her that you love from the heart ; that you are capable of all the constancy and fidelity she can wish for, and that she is sure of being happy in loving you."—" Do you

then believe all this of me?"—"Yes, I am fully persuaded of it."  
 "Then have the kindness to tell it to yourself."—"To myself, my dear friend?"—"To yourself."—"Ah! if it depend on me, you shall be consoled, and the glory shall be mine."

Thus was this new connection formed, and which, as may well be foreseen, was not of long duration: but it had for me the inestimable advantage of reanimating me to study. Never were love, and love of glory, more happily united than in my heart.

*Dionysius* was revived; and it had now the same success as in its novelty. The part of *Agétié* sensibly increased in interest by the exertions of her to whom nothing was dearer than my fame. She was more sublime, more enchanting in it than ever; and you may imagine with what pleasure the applauded actress and the applauded author retired home to sup together.

My enthusiasm for the talents of Mademoiselle Clairon was too lively, too exalted a sentiment, to allow me to distinguish accurately how much of my passion was love. But, independently of the charms of the actress, she was, in my eyes, a most desirable mistress. The brilliant vivacity of her youth, her gaiety, and all the attraction of a lovely temper, unmixed with caprice, and delighted in the sole desire of rendering her lover happy by the most delicate attentions. Whilst she loved, no one loved more tenderly, more passionately, more faithfully than she. As sure of her as of myself, my head at liberty, and my heart at peace, I gave a part of the day to study, and reserved the rest for her. I left her charming; charming and yet more charming I found her on my return. What a pity that so seducing a character should be so fickle, and that, with so much sincerity, nay fidelity, in her attachment, she should have so little constancy!

She had a friend, with whom she sometimes supped. One day she said to me; "Don't go there this evening; you would be uncomfortable: the Bailli de Fleury will sup there, and is to bring me back."—"I know him," answered I most simply, "he'll bring me back too."—"No," said she, "he will be only in a vis-à-vis." This word was a ray of light; and as she saw I was struck with it, "Well, my dear friend," said she, "'tis a whim of mine; you must pardon it."—"Is it indeed true?" said I, "do you speak seriously?"—"Yes, I am sometimes foolish, mad; but you will never find me false."—"I thank you for your candour," said I; "and I resign the place to M. le Bailli." For this time I felt courage and reason; and what happened to me the day after taught me how much more congenial and more grateful to my heart was an honourable sentiment than a frivolous and fleeting inclination.

An attorney of my native town, Rigal, called upon me, and said: "Mademoiselle B\*\*\* has promised you never to marry without the consent of your mother. Your mother is no more: Mademoiselle B\*\*\* is not less faithful to her word: she has received an advantageous offer, and she will accept none without your consent." At these words, I felt revive in me, not the love I once had for her, but that kind of tender inclination, so gentle, so lively and so tender, that I could not have resisted it, if my fortune and situation in life had had any stability. "Alas! said I to

Rigal, "I would I were in a state to oppose myself to the match that's offered to my dear B\*\*\*! But, unhappily, the lot I could propose to her is too vague and too uncertain. The hazards with which my life will be chequered, are such as her's should not be exposed to. She merits a solid happiness; and I can only envy him who is able to assure it to her."

A few days afterwards I received a note from Mademoiselle Clairon, in these words: "Your friendship is in this moment necessary to me. I know you too well not to reckon on it. Come and see me; I expect you." I went to her house. She had company. "I want to speak to you," said she on seeing me. I followed her into her cabinet. "You tell me, Mademoiselle," said I, "that my friendship can be of service to you. I come to know in what way, and to assure you of my zeal."—"Tis neither your zeal nor your friendship alone that I reclaim," said she, "it is your love: you must restore it me." Then, with an ingenuousness that to any other than myself would have been diverting, she told me how little *that doll*, the Bailli de Fleury, had deserved to excite my jealousy. After this humble confession, she employed, but in vain, all the most seducing arts that a lovely coquette can employ to regain a heart in which reflection had extinguished love.

"You have not deceived me," said I to her; "I will be as sincere with you; it is my duty. We are made to be friends, and we will be so all our lives, if you wish it; but we can never be lovers." I abridge a dialogue of which this was my invariable conclusion. I left her in sadness and in grief: but I felt that I was a little too severely revenged.

*Aristomène* was finished; I read it to the performers. Mademoiselle Clairon was present at this reading, and listened with cold dignity. They knew we were no longer intimate: I was the more applauded. It was a problem among the players, whether I should give her the part of the wife of *Aristomène*. She was uneasy about it, particularly when she heard that the other parts were distributed. She received her's; and a quarter of an hour afterward she came to me with one of her friends. "Here, Sir," said she to me, (coming in with that air which distinguishes her on the stage, and throwing the manuscript on my table), "I will not accept the part without its author: the one belongs to me by as good a title as the other."—"My dear friend," said I, embracing her, "in this character I am yours; do not ask more of me. Another sentiment would render us miserable."—"He is right," said she to her companion; "my giddy head would be his torment, and my own. Come, then, my friend, come and dine with your good friend." From this moment the most perfect intimacy was established between us; it has lasted thirty years the same; and though separated from each other by my new way of life, nothing has changed the integrity of our mutual sentiments.

I recollect a feature of that frank and sincere friendship that reigned between us, which ought not to escape me.

Mademoiselle Clairon was neither rich nor economical. She often wanted money. She said to me one day, "I want twelve louis: have you as much?"—"No, indeed I have not."—"Try and

get them for me, and bring them to me this evening into my box at the theatre." I instantly began my search. I knew many rich people; but I did not choose to address myself to them. I went to my Gascon abbés, and to some others of that class: I found them dry. I went sorrowfully into Mademoiselle Clairon's box; she was tête-à-tête with the Marquis of Duras. "You come very late," said she.—"I have been in quest of some money that is due to me," said I; "but I have lost my walk." Mademoiselle Clairon understood me, and I retired. As I was going to take my place in the amphitheatre, I heard some one call me by my name from the end of the corridor. I turned round, and saw the Duke of Duras coming up to me—"I have just heard you say," said he, "that you are in want of money; how much do you want?" At these words he drew out his purse. I thanked him, assuring him my wants were not so urgent. "That is no answer," replied he; "what is the sum you expected to receive?" "Twelve louis," answered I, at last. "Here they are," said he, "but on condition that whenever you want money you will address yourself to me." And when I returned them to him, and pressed him to take them again—"You insist on it?" said he, "therefore I take them; but remember that this purse, in which I put them, is yours." I made no use of this credit, but from that moment there is no kindness that he has not shewn me. We have been together at the French academy; and on every occasion he is entitled to my praise. He took pleasure in seizing opportunities of doing me kind offices. When I dined at his house, he always gave me his best Champagne; and in his fits of the gout, he still expressed pleasure at seeing me. He has been called capricious; he certainly never was so with me. Let us return to Aristomene.

Voltaire was then in Paris: he had expressed his inclination to see my piece before it was completed; and I had read to him four acts, which pleased him. But the act I had still to write gave him some inquietude; and not without reason. In the four acts he had heard, the plot seemed complete, and continued from one end to the other. "What!" said he, after the reading, "do you pretend, in your second tragedy, to be free from universal rule? When I wrote *The Death of Cesar*, in three acts, it was for a school, and my excuse was the constraint I was under to introduce only men. But you, on the great theatre, and on a subject where nothing could confine you, give a mutilated piece, and in four acts, an unsightly form, of which you have no example! This, at your age, is an unfortunate licence, that I cannot excuse." "And, indeed," said I, "this is a licence I have no intention of taking. My tragedy is in five acts, in my fancy; and I expect to complete them." "And how?" inquired he; "I have just heard the last act; all the others are perfectly coherent, and you surely do not think of falling back upon the beginning of your plot?" "No," answered I, "the plot will begin and finish as you have seen it; the rest is my secret. What I meditate is, perhaps, a folly. But, however perilous the step may be, I must take it; and if you damp my courage, all my labour will be lost."



“Cheerly, then, my good friend; go on: risk, venture all; 'tis always a good sign. In our profession, as in war, there are fortunate temerities; and the greatest beauties frequently burst forth under the most desperate difficulties.”

At the first representation he insisted on placing himself behind me in my box; and I owe him this testimony, that he was almost as agitated, and as trembling as myself. “Now,” said he, “before the curtain is drawn up, tell me from what incident you have drawn the act that was wanting.” I made him recollect that, at the end of the second act, it was said that the wife and son of Aristomène were going to be tried, and that, at the commencement of the third, it appeared that they had been condemned. “Well,” said I, “this trial, that was then supposed to take place between the acts, I have introduced on the stage.” “What! a criminal court on the stage!” exclaimed he; “you make me tremble.” “Yes,” said I, “it is a dangerous sand; but it was inevitable; it is Clairon that must save me.”

Aristomène had at least as much success as *Dionysius*. Voltaire, at every burst of applause, pressed me in his arms. But what astonished him, and made him leap for joy, was the effect of the third act. When he beheld Léonide, loaded with irons, like a criminal, appear in the midst of her judges, and command them by her dignity and greatness, get full possession of the stage, and of the souls of the spectators, turn her defence into accusation, and, distinguishing among the senators the virtuous friends of Aristomène from his faithless enemies, attack and crush them with the conviction of their perfidy, amid the applauses she received, *Brava Clairon!* cried Voltaire; “*macte animo, generose puer!*”

Certainly no one feels more sensibly than I do, how little worthy I was, in point of talent, to excite his envy. But my success was great enough to have excited his jealousy, had he known that weakness. No; Voltaire was too sensible of his own superiority to fear vulgar talents. Perhaps a new Corneille, or a new Racine, might have vexed him; but it was not so easy as was supposed to disquiet the author of *Zaire*, of *Alzire*, of *Merope*, and of *Mahomet*.

At this first representation of *Aristomène*, I was again obliged to shew myself on the stage; but, at the subsequent representations, my friends encouraged me to conceal myself from the acclamations of the public.

An accident interrupted my good fortune, and troubled my joy. Roselli, the actor whom I have already mentioned, played the part of Alcire, the friend of Aristomène, and played it with as much warmth as intelligence. He was neither handsome nor well made; he had even a very sensible lisp in his pronunciation. But his defects were thrown into the back ground by the correctness of his action, and an expression of countenance full of intelligence and soul. To him I attributed the success of the *dénouement* of my tragedy; and this is the way in which he decided it. When, in the last scene, speaking of the decree by

which the senate had completed the measure of its atrocities, he said—

Théonis le defend, et s'en nomme l'auteur.\*

He perceived that the public were rising with indignation; and instantly advancing to the edge of the stage, with the liveliest action, he cried to the pit, as it were to appease them—

Je m'élançe, et lui plonge le poignard dans le cœur.†

At the attitude, at the gesture that accompanied these words, they thought they beheld Theonis expiring; and the whole theatre resounded with a transport of joy.

But, after the sixth representation of my piece, and in the greatest warmth of success, I was informed that Roselli was attacked with an inflammation in his lungs; and, to replace him in his part, they proposed a performer incapable of playing it. It was a very great prejudice to me to interrupt this concourse of the public: but it would have been a yet more serious ill to have degraded my work. I requested that the representations should be suspended till the health of Roselli should be re-established; and it was not till the following winter that *Aristomène* was revived.

At the first representation of this revival the public emotion was so strong that the author was again called for. I refused to appear on the stage, but I was behind some friends in a box. Some one perceived me from the pit, and cried, "*There he is!*" The box was toward the amphitheatre; the whole pit faced about; I was obliged to advance, and answer by an humble salutation to this new favour.

The man who took me in his arms, from an obscure part of his box, to present me to the public, will occupy a considerable place in these memoirs, on account of the harm he did me in endeavouring to promote my interest, and of the attracting and dangerous charms I found in his society. It was M. de la Poplinière. Ever since the success of *Dionysius the Tyrant*, I had been welcome at his house. But, at the time of which I am speaking, the courage he had to offer me a retreat in his country-house, at the risk of displeasing the all-powerful man I had offended, strongly attached me to so generous a friend. The danger from which he drew me arose from one of those youthful adventures in which my imprudence engaged me, and which will teach my children to be wiser than myself.

\* *Theonis defends it, and proclaims himself the author;*

† *I rush forward, and plunged the dagger into his heart.*

## BOOK III.

WHILE I lived near the Luxembourg, an actress who had long been at the comic opera, La Darimat, the friend of Mademoiselle Clairon, and the wife of Durancy, a comedian in a provincial company, being brought to bed at Paris, had engaged my actress to be godmother to her child; and I was chosen for its godfather. It happened, from this christening, that Madame Durancy, who had sometimes heard me talk on the art of declamation at Mademoiselle Clairon's, said to me one day, "Would you like me to give you a young and handsome actress to bring up? She is ambitious of excelling in tragedy, and it is well worth your while to instruct her. It is Mademoiselle Verrière, a young lady under the protection of Mareschal Saxe. She is your neighbour, is prudent, and lives very decently with her mother and sister. The mareschal, as you know, is gone to see the king of Prussia; and we wish, at his return, to give him the pleasure of finding his ward playing *Zaire* and *Iphigénie* better than Mademoiselle Gaussin. If you will undertake to teach her, I'll introduce you to-morrow; we'll dine together at her house."

My adventure with Mademoiselle Navarre had not at all offended Mareschal Saxe; he had even shewn me some kindness; and before *Aristomène* was presented to the theatre, he had sent to invite me to read it to him. This reading, *tête-à-tête*, had interested him; and he was much impressed with the part of *Aristomène*. He thought that of Léonide theatrical: "But, zounds!" said he, "that's a most desperate woman! I would not have her for the world." This was his only criticism. He appeared pleased, and expressed his satisfaction with the noble and manly frankness by which the hero was distinguished.

I was enchanted, therefore, at having an opportunity of doing what might be agreeable to him, and very innocently, but very imprudently, I accepted the proposal.

This girl, was one of the mareschal's mistresses. She had been given to him at the age of seventeen. He had had a daughter by her, since acknowledged, and married under the name of Aurore de Saxe. At the birth of this child he had settled an annuity on her of one hundred pounds: he gave her, beside, five hundred pounds a year for her expenses. He loved her tenderly as a friend; but, as to his pleasures, she was no longer admitted to them. The gentleness, the ingenuousness, the timidity of her character, had nothing sufficiently inviting for him. It is notorious that, with much nobleness and dignity of soul, the mareschal was fond of mirth and jollity. By taste, as well as by system, he loved merriment in his armies; saying that the French never did so well as when they were led on gaily, and that what they most feared, in war, was wearisome inactivity. He had always a company of opera singers and dancers in his camp; and it was at the theatre that he gave the order of battle. On those days the prin-

cipal actress used to come forward, and say, "*Gentlemen, to-morrow there will be no play, on account of the mareschal's engaging the enemy. The day after to-morrow, the Cock of the Village, with the Merry Intrigues, &c.*"

Two actresses of this theatre, Chantilly and Beaumenard, were his two favourite mistresses; and their rivalship, their jealousy, their caprices, gave him, as he said, "*more torment than the hussars of the Queen of Hungary.*" I have seen these words in one of his letters. It was for these women that Mademoiselle Navarre had been neglected. He thought her too haughty, with too little complaisance, and too much delicacy. Mademoiselle Verrière, with infinitely less artifice, had no ambition to dispute the preference with her rivals: to please, she seemed to depend entirely on her beauty, without any other care than that of preserving an equality of temper, and by the indolence with which she suffered herself to be loved.

The first scenes that we rehearsed together were those of Zaire with those of Orosmane. Her face, her voice, the sensibility of her eye, her air of candour and modesty, perfectly accorded with her part; and I did but express mine with too much vehemence and warmth. At our second lesson, these words, "*Zaire, you weep!*" were the rock on which my prudence struck.

The docility of my pupil made me assiduous. This assiduity was maliciously interpreted. The mareschal, who was then in Prussia, being informed of our acquaintance, fell into a transport of anger that was little worthy so great a man. The fifty pounds that Mademoiselle Verrière received every month were stopped, and he declared that, as long as he lived, he never would see again either the mother or her child. He kept his word; and it was not till after his death, and partly by my mediation, that Aurore was acknowledged, and educated in a convent, as the daughter of this hero.

The situation of my Zaire, thus forsaken and abandoned, overwhelmed us both with grief. I had forty pounds left of the produce of my new tragedy; I begged her to accept them. Mademoiselle Clairon, and all our friends, advised us not to see each other, at least for some time. It cost us a flood of tears; but we followed their advice.

The mareschal returned: I was told, in every quarter, that he was furious against me. I have since learnt from marshal Lowendal, and from two of his other friends, that they had, with much difficulty, moderated his anger. He went about saying, in all parties, at court, and to the king himself, that that little insolent poet had robbed him of all his mistresses (although I had only taken those he had abandoned). He handed about a letter of mine, which a faithless servant had stolen from my Zaire. Fortunately, in this letter, speaking of the tragedy of *Cleopatra*, which I was then writing, it was said that Antony was *a hero in love as well as in battle*. "And you may easily enough conjecture who he means," said the mareschal. This allusion, which I never thought of, flattered him, and, in flattering, calmed him. Yet my torments were the more cruel, because I was resolved, at the risk of my

life, to revenge myself, if he had dared to insult me. In this situation, one of the most painful in which I have ever been, M. de la Poplinière proposed to me to retire to his country house; and, on the other side, the prince of Turenne alleviated the sorrow I felt at leaving my Zaire in misfortune.

This prince, meeting me one evening in the green-room at the French theatre, came to me, and said, "It is on your account that Mareschal Saxe has quitted Mademoiselle Verrière; will you give me your word never to see her again? Her misfortune shall be repaired." This explained to me the mysterious rendezvous she had had the evening before in the wood of Boulogne, and the tears she had shed on bidding me farewell. "Prince," answered I, "I give you the promise you ask me. May Mademoiselle Verrière be happy with you! I consent to see her no more." He took her; and I was faithful to my word.

Retired, almost solitary, in this country house, then very different from what it had been, and what it since was, I had full time to indulge in reflections on myself. I turned my eyes to the abyss, on the border of which I had just passed. The hero of Fontenoy, the idol of the army, and of all France, the man before whom the first nobility of the kingdom bowed with respect, and whom the king himself received with all the distinction that could flatter a great man, was the person I had offended, without even having for my excuse the distraction of imperious love. This imprudent and frail girl had not concealed from me that she was still bound to the mareschal, by his favours, and as the father of her child. I was so well persuaded, so convinced of the dreadful risk we both ran, that when, at improper hours, I stole to her house, it was never without trembling. I used to find her, and leave her still more trembling than myself. There was no pleasure that would not have been too dearly paid by our being surprised and denounced. And if the mareschal, informed of my temerity, disdaining to take my life, had only bribed one of his servants to insult me, I could but oppose to this fear a resolution that I cannot think of without shuddering. "Ah! shudder with me, my children, at the dangers that a too ardent mind exposed me to, for the sake of a fortuitous and transient connection, without any other inducement than that of pleasure and opportunity. I point out to you this shoal, in order to preserve you from shipwreck."

A little time after, the mareschal died; but not till he had exhibited great magnanimity toward me, like the lion toward the mouse in the fable. At the first representation of *Cleopâtre*, meeting me in the corridor, as he came out of his box (a meeting that made me turn pale) he had the kindness to express his approbation in these words: "Well done, Sir; well done!" I sincerely regretted in him the defender of my country, and the generous man who had pardoned me; and to honour his memory as much as I could, I wrote this epitaph:

A Courtney Fabius, Annibal à Bruxelles,  
Sur la Meuse Condé, Turenne sur le Rhin,  
Au léopard farouche il imposa le frein,  
Et de l'aigle rapide il abattit les ailes.

The retreat in which I endeavoured to secure myself from the temptations of Paris soon offered me new ones : but at that instant it only offered me serious lessons on moral conduct. To inform you of the cause of the silent and sombre sadness that then reigned where pleasures seemed to have fixed their seat, I must recur a little to the past, and tell you how this enchantment was formed and destroyed.

M. de la Poplinière was not the richest financier of his time ; but he was the most sumptuous. He began by taking for his mistress, and afterward for his wife, the daughter of an actress. He had no intention of marrying her ; but she obliged him to it : and by the following means. The famous Madame de Tencin, after having raised her brother to the dignity of Cardinal, and introduced him to the council of state, had, through him, an obscure, but powerful, interest with the old cardinal Fleury. Mademoiselle Dancour contrived to be presented to her ; and as a young innocent creature, that had been seduced, she complained that M. de la Poplinière, after having flattered her with the hopes of becoming his wife, thought no longer of marrying her. " He shall marry you," said Madame de Tencin. " I'll engage for it. Conceal from him that you have seen me ; and take no notice of what has passed between us."

The critical moment approached for renewing the leases for farming the king's revenues, and it was a trial among the old farmer-generals to remain on the list. It was hinted to Cardinal Fleury that this was the moment to put an end to a flagrant scandal. Mademoiselle Dancour was represented to him as an interesting victim of seduction ; and La Poplinière as one of those men who trifle with innocence, when he had taken advantage of its frailty and good faith.

The act of keeping a mistress publicly was a luxury yet unauthorized among financiers ; and the cardinal pretended to make a point of maintaining good morals. When La Poplinière, therefore, went to solicit his favours for the new lease, the cardinal asked him who Mademoiselle Dancour was. " She is a young lady that I have taken under my care," answered La Poplinière ; and he spoke in praise of her wit, her accomplishments, and her good breeding. " I am very glad," replied the cardinal, " to hear you speak so highly of her. Every body says the same, and it is the king's intention to give your place to him who will marry her. It is nothing more than just that, after having seduced her, you should leave to her, as her marriage portion, that situation in life which she had a right to expect from yourself and from the promises you made her. La Poplinière wanted to deny ever having made such an engagement. " You have abused her," insisted the minister, " and but for you she would still have possessed her innocence. It is a wrong that you should repair. This is the advice I give you, and do not hesitate to follow it ; otherwise I can do nothing for you." Lose his place, or marry ! The alternative was painful. La Poplinière chose the least evil of the two ; but he wanted to give the appearance of free will to his forced resolution, and the next day, when Mademoiselle Dancour awoke : " Get

up," said he to her, "and come with your mother, whither I am about to conduct you." She obeyed. He took them to his attorney's. "Now," said he to them, "attend to the instrument that we are going to sign." It was the marriage contract. The scene seemed to produce its effect. The daughter pretended to faint, the mother embraced the knees of him who thus completed his own kindness and their wishes. He enjoyed, to the full, their feigned gratitude; and as long as he could indulge the illusion of a husband, who thinks himself beloved, he saw his house embellished by the enchantments of his captivating spouse. The first nobility attended his suppers and balls; but jealous inquietude and suspicion soon troubled his repose. His wife had taken wing. Borne away by a crowd, through which he could not follow her, she was invited to suppers where he was not present, and his enemies took a malicious pleasure in telling him, in anonymous letters, that he was the jest of the gay circle that attended her. It was at this time that he invited me to his house; but I was at first only admitted to his private society. There I met the celebrated Rameau Latour, the most ingenious painter in pastel that we have had; Vaucanson, the wonderful mechanician; Carle-Vanloo, the great designer and colourist, and his wife, who, with the voice of a nightingale, first taught us Italian singing.

Madame de Poplinière shewed me some attention. She wished me to read *Aristomène* to her, and, of all the critics I had consulted, she was, in my opinion, the best. After having heard my piece, she analyzed it with a clearness and precision that were surprising; she retraced to me, scene by scene, the course of the plot; marked the passages that had appeared to her beautiful, as well as those which she had thought feeble; and, in all the corrections she proposed, her observations struck me as so many rays of light. A penetration so sharp, so rapid, and yet so just, astonished the whole company; and at this reading, though I was abundantly applauded, I must say that her success eclipsed mine. Her husband sat amazed and afflicted. His admiration for this happy facility of memory and intelligence, for this vein of eloquence, that seemed like inspiration, in short, for this union of talent and taste that astonished him, as well as us, in his wife, was clouded by a load of grief and melancholy, of which he only knew the cause. He had wished his wife to withdraw from the circles of fashion into which she was pressed; but she had treated the constraint he would have imposed on her as a capricious tyranny and humiliating slavery; and hence arose the violent disputes that took place between them in private.

La Poplinière alleviated his cares with us, and most particularly with me, by satires on the splendid crowd with which, he said, he was fatigued, and from which he would gladly remove. He had persuaded me to live with him. My simplicity, my frankness, suited him. "Let us live together," said he; "we are formed to love each other: and I intreat you, to quit the giddy crowd, that has seduced you, as it once seduced me. What can you expect from it?"—"Protectors," replied I, "and the means of fortune."—"Protectors! Ah! if you knew how all those creatures

protect !..... Fortune ! have I not enough for us both ? I have no child, and, thank heaven, I never shall have one. Remain content with me, and let us not separate ; for I feel every day that you become more necessary to my comfort.

In spite of his repugnance to see me escape from him, he could not refuse Mademoiselle de Tencin, to whom he was respectful from policy, when she requested that he would take me to her house, to read my tragedy to her. It was *Aristomène* that I was to read. The audience was respectable. I found assembled there Montesquieu, Fontenelle, Mairan, Marivaux, the young Helvétius, Astruc, and others, all men of letters or science, and in the midst of them a woman of excellent talents and profound judgment, but who, enveloped in her exterior of plainness and simplicity, had rather the air of the housekeeper than of the mistress. This was Mademoiselle de Tencin. I had occasion for all my lungs to make myself heard by Fontenelle ; and, though very near his ear, I was obliged to pronounce every word very loudly and forcibly. But he listened to me with so much kindness, that he made the efforts of this painful reading pleasant to me. It was, as you may well conceive, extremely monotonous, without inflexion, without colouring. Yet I was honoured with the suffrages of the assembly ; I had even the honour of dining with Mademoiselle de Tencin, and from that day I should have been inscribed on her list of dinner visitors ; but M. de la Poplinière had no difficulty in persuading me that there was too much wit there for me ; and indeed, I soon perceived that each guest arrived ready to play his part, and that the desire of exhibiting did not always leave conversation the liberty of following its easy and natural course. Every one was eager to catch his opportunity of introducing his epigram, his story, his anecdote, his maxim, or his light and pointed satire ; and to this effect the means they used were often unnatural.

In Marivaux, impatience to give proof of acuteness and sagacity was visibly betrayed. Montesquieu, with more calmness, waited till his turn came, but he was aware of it. Marian watched his opportunity. Astruc did not deign to wait for it. Fontenelle alone let it come without seeking it ; and he used so discreetly the attention with which he was listened to, that his acute remarks and charming stories never occupied but a moment. Helvétius, attentive and discreet, sat collecting for a future day. This was an example for me that I should not have had the resolution to follow : and therefore I found in this society but little attraction.

It was not the same with that of a lady to whom my happy stars had introduced me at Mademoiselle de Tencin's, and who, from that time had the kindness to invite me to her house. This lady, who was then beginning to choose and compose her literary society, was Mademoiselle Geoffrin. I answered her invitation too late, and once more M. de la Poplinière interfered and prevented me from visiting her. " What should you do there ?" said he : " it is but another rendezvous of fine wits."

It was thus that he held me captive, when my adventure happened with mareschal Saxe. But what attached me to him more



particularly was seeing him so wretched, and perceiving how much he stood in need of me. He was still tormented by anonymous letters. He was assured that even at Passy a happy rival continually saw his wife. He observed her motions; he had her watched night and day; she was informed of it, and looked on him as the jailor of her prison.

I here learned what a family is, when, on one side jealousy, and on the other hatred, steal into it like two serpents. A delightful house, which arts, talents, and innocent pleasures seemed to have made their abode; and yet, in this house, luxury, affluence and abundance of all that is estimable, were destroyed by mistrust and fear, by foul suspicion and cruel vexation! At table, the melancholy taciturnity of the husband, the proud and cold indignation of the wife; the care with which they avoided each other's looks, and the frightful and melancholy air with which they met, particularly before their servants; the effort they made over themselves to address a few words to each other, and the dry and hard tone in which they answered, made it difficult to conceive how two beings so strongly alieated could live together; but the lady determined not to quit the house, and the husband, in the eyes of the world, and in justice, had no right to drive her away.

I, who at last knew the cause of this misunderstanding, neglected nothing to mitigate the sorrows of him whose heart seemed to lean on mine. A wretch, whom I disdain to name, because he is dead, has accused me of having been the devoted slave of La Poplinière. I commence by declaring that I have never received from him the slightest favour; and after this, I acknowledge, without blushing, that, by a disinterested and friendly inclination, I studied to please him. Equally distant from adulation and neglect, I did not flatter, but I consoled him: I rendered him the good office that Horace attributed to the muses, *vos leno consilium et datis, et dato gaudetis almae*. And would to heaven that he had not been more indulgent to my vanity than I was to his! That spirit of self-love, which exaggerates in our eyes the value of all that interests us, had so deceived his fancy about the young poet he had adopted, that whatever proceeded from my pen appeared to him beautiful. Instead of the severe friend I wanted, I found in him only an easy approver. This was one of the causes to which I attribute that want of exertion which marks every thing I wrote while I lived with him.

Towards the end of autumn, he became weary of the melancholy of his country house, and quitted it. A short time afterwards happened the adventure which separated him from his wife. One day, when Marshal Saxe treated the public with a review of his Hulans in the *plaine des Sablons*, La Poplinière, more tormented than ever by anonymous letters, which repeated to him that his wife received marshal Richelieu every night in her chamber, chose the time when she was at the review, to examine her apartment, and try to discover how a man could be introduced there, in spite of the vigilance of a porter, of whom he was sure. He had with him, to aid him in his search, Vaucanson and Balot; the latter a little attorney, of an acute and penetrating mind, but

a strange grotesque personage; his language was trivial and hyperbolic, and his character was a mixture of meanness and arrogance; proud and lofty by fits, and servile by habit. It was he that used to praise M. de la Poplinière for the delicacy of his skin, and said of him, in a moment of ill humour, *he is drunk with gold; let him sleep it off*. As for Vaucanson, his whole soul was absorbed in his peculiar talent; and out of mechanics nothing could be more ignorant nor more stupid than he.

In examining the apartment of Madame de la Poplinière, Balot remarked that, in the cabinet where her harpsichord stood, a carpet had been laid, and that in the chimney there was neither wood, nor ashes, nor fire irons, although the weather was already cold, and there were fires in every other room. By induction, he took it into his head to strike the plate that formed the back of the chimney with his cane; the plate sounded hollow. Vaucanson, now coming up, perceived that it was mounted on hinges, and so perfectly united to the lining on each side, that the juncture was almost imperceptible. "Oh! Sir," cried he, turning to M. de la Poplinière, "what a beautiful piece of workmanship is this! and what an excellent workman was he who did it! This plate is moveable, it opens; but its hinges are of such delicacy!.....No, Sir, no snuff-box can be more highly finished. An excellent mechanic that!"—"What, Sir," said La Poplinière, turning pale, "you are sure that this plate opens!"—"Certainly, I am sure of it; I see it," said Vaucanson, in an extacy of admiration and delight; "nothing can be more wonderful."—"What have I to do with your wonder? We are not here to admire."—"Ah! Sir, such workmen are very rare! I surely have very good ones, but I have not one who....." "Think no more of your workmen," interrupted La Poplinière, "but let me send for one who can force this plate."—"Tis pity," said Vaucanson, "to destroy so exquisite a piece of workmanship as that."

Behind the plate, an opening made in the partition wall was closed by a pane of wainscot, which, covered with a looking-glass in the adjoining house, could be opened at will, and afford the clandestine occupier of the neighbouring room a free passage into the cabinet of Madame de la Poplinière. The unhappy husband, who only sought, I believe, some legal means of getting rid of his wife, sent for a police officer, and had his discovery and his misfortune formally confirmed by a written declaration.

His wife was still at the review, when she was told what was passing at home. That she might at all events be admitted on her return, she entreated marshal Loewendal to accompany her; but the door was shut, and the marshal would not take on himself to force it. She then addressed herself to Mareschal Saxe. "Let me but enter my house," said she to him, "and let me speak to my husband, 'tis all I ask; you will have saved me." The mareschal made her get into his carriage; and when he arrived at the door, he got out, and knocked himself. The faithful porter, half opening the door, was telling him he could not enter.—"Don't you know me?" said the Mareschal to him; "I will teach you

that no door is shut to me. Come in, madame ; enter your house." He took her by the hand, and walked up with her.

La Poplinière, aflighted, came to meet him. " Why, what's all this, my good friend ? said the mareschal to him ; " a disturbance, a dispute, a scandalous exposition for the public ? You can gain nothing by all this but ridicule. Don't you perceive that your enemies are seeking to separate you, and that they employ every artifice to succeed ? Do not be the dupe of them. Listen to your wife, who will fully justify herself in your eyes. She only desires to live happily with you." La Poplinière kept a respectful silence ; and the mareschal retired, recommending to them decency and peace.

Alone with her husband, Madame de la Poplinière armed herself with all her courage, and with all her eloquence. She asked him on what new suspicion, on what new accusation he had shut his door against her ? And when he mentioned the plate at the back of the chimney, she was indignant that he should think her the accomplice of so culpable an invention. Was it not rather into his apartment than into hers, that its contrivers wished to penetrate ? And to form clandestinely this passage from one house to the other, what more was necessary than to bribe a servant and a workman ? But how could he doubt the cause of a stratagem so visibly invented to ruin her in his opinion ? " I was too happy with you," said she to him ; " and it is my happiness that has excited envy. 'Tis envy that dictated those anonymous letters ; but, not satisfied without adding proof to her accusation, in her rage she has imagined this detestable machine. What do I say ? Ever since she has persisted to persecute me, could you not see what was the crime that irritated her ? Is there another woman in Paris whose repose, whose honour has been so violently attacked ? Ah ! because there is not another who has offended her like me, as I should still offend her if you were more just. I contributed to the happiness of a man, whose understanding, accomplishments, consideration, and honourable existence are the torments of the envious. It is you whom they wish to make wretched and ridiculous. Yes, this is the motive of those anonymous libels you every day receive ; and this the success they hope for from this palpable snare they have laid for you." Then throwing herself at his feet, " Ah ! Sir, restore me to your esteem, to your confidence, and if I dare ask it, to your tenderness ; and my love shall revenge you, while it revenges myself for the wrong our common enemies have done us."

Unhappily, too strongly convinced, La Poplinière was inflexible. " Madame," said he to her, " all the artifice of your language cannot make me change my resolution. We can live no longer together. If you retire modestly, without disturbance, I will provide for you. If you oblige me to have recourse to rigorous measures to force you away, I will employ them ; and every sentiment of indulgence and kindness for you will be stifled in my bosom." He allowed her, I believe, eight hundred pounds a-year, with which she went to live, or rather die, in an obscure retreat, forsaken by the splendid society that had so often flattered her, and

that despised her when she was in misfortune. A slight swelling that she had in her breast was the germ of a corrosive humour that slowly devoured her. Mareschal Richelieu, who sought elsewhere for new pastime and new pleasures, whilst she was wearing away in the most cruel torture, did not neglect to pay her the duties of civility as he passed; and hence it was said, in society, after she was dead—"Indeed M. de Richelieu has behaved most admirably to her! He did not cease to see her till her last moment."

It was to be loved thus, that this woman, who, at her own house, had her conduct been correct, would have enjoyed the public esteem, and all the comforts of an honoured and enviable life, sacrificed her repose, her fortune, and all her comforts. And what renders this delirium of vanity still more dreadful is, that neither her heart nor her senses had any considerable share in it. Madame de la Poplinière, with a lively imagination, was of extreme coldness, but an intriguing Duke had appeared to her, as to many others, a glorious conquest: this it was that ruined her.

La Poplinière, separated from his wife, thought only of living as an independent opulent man. His house at Passy again became a most enchanting, but most dangerous, residence for me. He had in his pay the best concert of music known at that time. The performers lived at his house, and rehearsed together in a morning, with wonderful effect, the symphonies they were to play in the evening. The first comedians, and particularly the female singers and dancers of the opera, attended and embellished his suppers. At these suppers, when the ear had been charmed by the purest voice, the company were agreeably surprised to see Lany, his sister, the young Puvigné, quit the table during the concert, and dance in the same room to the airs of the symphony. All the principal musicians from Italy, and, singers of both sexes, were lodged and boarded in the house; and each was emulous of excelling in their concerts. Rameau there composed his operas; and on festivals, at mass in the private chapel, he gave us on the organ specimens of astonishing genius. Never did a private man live more like a prince; and princes came and partook of his pleasures.

At his theatre, for he had one, they only played comedies of his own writing; and the performers were chosen from his own society. These comedies, though indifferent, were at least so well written, and shewed so much taste, that it did not require any excessive complaisance to applaud them. Their success was the more infallible, as the play was followed by a splendid supper, to which the most select spectators, the ambassadors from the different courts of Europe, the first nobility, and the most beautiful women in Paris, were invited.

La Poplinière did the honour of his supper like a man to whom fashionable society had taught the sentiment of propriety; whose air, tone, and manners, had nothing that was not perfectly decorous; whose pride even had learnt to envelop itself in politeness and modesty, and who, in the attentions he shewed the great, always preserved a certain air of freedom and simple civility, that

well became him, because it was natural. No man, when he wished to please, was more amiable than he. He had wit, gallantry, and, without any study or much cultivation, a considerable talent for versification. Away from his house, those who came to enjoy his luxury and expense, did not fail to ridicule the life he led: but at his house he only heard felicitation and praise; and with more or less complaisance, each paid him in flattery the pleasures he received. He was, indeed, as has been said of him, an old spoiled child of fortune; but I, who saw him habitually and near, and who sometimes was afflicted at finding him a little too vain, am now astonished that he was not more so.

A defect in him much more deplorable than this vanity of wealth and state, was the thirst of Tantalus for a species of enjoyment of which he was no longer or scarcely capable. La Fontaine's financier complained that *at market no one sold sleep, as well as meat and drink*. As for La Poplinière, it was not sleep that he would have paid for so dearly.

Pleasures courted him; but whilst fortune brought them to him in crowds, nature prescribed him an humiliating abstinence; and this alternative of continual privation was a torment to him. He could not imagine that the defect was in himself. He never failed to accuse the object that was present; and whenever some new object appeared to him more agreeable, he became gallant and gay, as if expanded by this gentle ray of hope. It was then that he was cheerful and pleasant. He told us merry stories, sang songs of his own composing, and, in a style sometimes free and sometimes delicate, according to the object that animated him. But the next morning his mirth and gaiety were dissipated: he was sad and dissatisfied.

I, too, who was here courted by opportunity, was far from infallible. I felt that indulgence hurt me, and that, to avoid it, I should remove from temptation; but I had not the courage. The corridor, in which I lodged, was generally occupied by girls from the theatre. In such a neighbourhood it was difficult to be economical, either of my hours of sleep or of study. The pleasures of the table likewise contributed to obscure my mental faculties. I never suspected that temperance was the nurse of genius; and yet nothing is more true. I awoke with my head troubled, and my ideas heavy with the vapours of an ample supper. I was astonished that my spirits were not as pure and as free as in the rue des Mathurins, or in the rue des Maçons: so true is it that the operations of the imagination must not be discomposed by those of the other faculties. The muses, it has been said, are chaste; it should have been added, that they are temperate; and both these maxims were with me totally forgotten.

I had carelessly finished my tragedy of *Cleopatra*; and this piece, on which, in the collection of my works, I have employed the most labour, then savoured, as I have said elsewhere, of the precipitation with which we write, at an age when we have not yet felt how difficult it is to write well. It needed all the indulgence of the public to obtain the very moderate success of eleven representations. I had introduced upon the stage the dénouement with which history

furnished me ; and Pancanson had undertaken to contrive for me an automaton aspic, that, at the moment when Cleopatra pressed it to her bosom, to excite its bite, should imitate, almost to nature, the motion of the living aspic. But the surprise created by this ingenious piece of mechanism, diverted the spectators from the true interest of the moment. I have since preferred a dénouement more simple. Beside, I ought to acknowledge that I had presumed too much on my own powers, when I hoped to persuade my audience to pardon Anthony's excessive error. The example it affords is terrible ; but the extreme difficulty was to make it affecting.

I now sought a subject more pathetic, and I imagined I had found it in the story of the *Héraclides*. It had some resemblance to *Iphigenie en Aulide* ; but the two subjects were so different, in the characters and incidents of the action, that the same Greek poet, Euripides, had written a tragedy on each. However, scarcely had my piece been received, and given for rehearsal, when the current report every where was, that on a subject similar to that of Racine, I wanted to contend for the laurel with him.

This report was spread with such affectation of marked malevolence, that I perceived I had enemies ; I soon learned that I had a host of them. I inquired the reason ; I was then ignorant of it ; but I have since known it too well. At the theatre, the gentle but perfidious Gaussin had alienated from me all her party ; and her party was numerous ; for it was formed, first of her own friends, and then of the enemies of Mademoiselle Clairon, to whom were added the zealous partisans of Mademoiselle Duménil. Clairon, by her excellence, perpetually bore away some part from each of these actresses, and I, her faithful poet, was the object of their enmity. Among the frequenters and intriguers of the green-room, I had against me all the enemies of Voltaire ; and, beside those, all his enthusiasts, who, less generous than himself, could not even tolerate merit below his. Several societies that I had neglected, after having been received into them, were offended that I had not made a suitable return to their offers of kindness ; and the friendship that M. de la Poplinière had for me made the hatred of those who envied him recoil upon me. Add to these, that crowd of people, who are naturally disposed to cry down those who are rising, and to enjoy the misfortunes of those they have seen prosper, and you will conceive how, without having injured any one, without having offended any one, I was already oppressed with so many enemies. I had even some among the young men, who, having heard my frivolous adventures mentioned in society, supposed that in gallantry I had all the pretensions of their foppery, and who would not pardon me for rivalling them ; which proves, by-the-bye, that the old maxim, *conceal thy actions*, suits no one better than a man of letters, and that it is only by his writings that he should be celebrated.

But a more terrible enemy to me than all these was the Procope Coffee-house. I had at first frequented this coffee-house, the rendezvous of the frequenters and arbiters of the pit, and was very well received there. But, after the success of *Dionysius* and *Aristagoras*, I had been imprudently advised not to go ; and this ad-

vice I had followed. So sudden and so abrupt a desertion, attributed to my vanity, did me the greatest harm; and the favour which this tribunal had before shewn me was now turned into enmity. It is a warning for you, my children, to be reserved in the connections you form while young; for it is difficult to dissolve those in which we are once engaged, without leaving bitter resentments and cruel enmities. Instead of withdrawing insensibly, I quitted mine abruptly; this was a very great fault.

Finally, too much sincerity, perhaps too much roughness, with which my character was embued, never permitted me to dissemble the aversion and contempt which excited in me those wretched journalists, who, as Voltaire said, *attack every day that which is best, and praise that which is worst; and who convert the noble profession of letters into a trade as base and as despicable as themselves.* From the moment my successes began, I found myself assailed by them as by a swarm of wasps; and, from Fréron to the Abbé Aubert, there was not one of those wretched scribblers, who did not revenge my contempt by an outrageous invective against all my works.

Such were the dispositions of a part of the public when I brought out the *Heracrides*. It was the most feebly written of all my theatrical works; but it was the most pathetic; and at the rehearsals I cannot express the impression it had made. Mademoiselle Duménil played in it the part of Déjanire; Mademoiselle Clairon, that of Olimpie; and, in their scenes, the expression of the love and grief of the mother was so affecting, that she who played the daughter was, in one instance, unable to utter a word. The audience melted into tears. M. de la Poplinière, as well as all who were present, answered for its full success.

I have mentioned elsewhere by what circumstance the whole effect of those pathetic scenes was destroyed at the first representation. But, what I have not chosen to explain in a preface, I may state clearly in these private memoirs. Mademoiselle Duménil loved wine. It was her custom to drink a tumbler between the acts, but so weakened with water as not to intoxicate her. Unfortunately, on that day her servant brought it her pure, without her knowledge. In the first act she had acquitted herself to admiration, and was applauded to the skies. Heated with exertion she drank the wine, and it rose to her head. In this state of intoxication and insensibility she played the rest of her part, or rather stammered it out, with so wild, so insane an air, that the pathetic became laughable; and you know, when the pit once begins to take the serious as raillery, nothing touches them any longer, and, like cold parodists, they are bent only on ridicule.

As the public knew not what had passed behind the scenes, they did not fail to attribute to the part the extravagance of the actress; and the report about Paris was, that my piece was so extravagant, and so comical, that the spectators had burst with laughter.

Although I was no favourite with Mademoiselle Duménil, yet, as she attributed to herself, at least, a part of my misfortune, she thought it her duty to exert herself to repair it. The piece was given again out, in spite of me; it was played by the two actresses

as well as possible: the few people who saw it shed tears; but the prejudice against it being once established, all was over. It rose no more; and, at the sixth representation, I desired that it might not be played again.

My children will have read the recital I have made elsewhere of the fête that awaited me at Passy on the day of the first representation of the *Heracles*, and the unseasonableness of which would have completed my humiliation, if I had not had the presence of mind to place on the head of Mademoiselle Clairon the crown of laurel that was so untimely offered me. I only mention here this incident, to shew with what assurance M. de la Poplinière had reckoned on the success of my work. He persisted in the opinion he had had of it; and the warmth of his friendship was redoubled, to rouse me from the melancholy dejection that preyed on my soul.

My mind, as it rose from this depression, assumed a more masculine character, and even some tint of philosophy; thanks to adversity, and thanks too, perhaps, to the connections I had formed. My enchantment at Passy was not so extravagant as to make me forget Paris. I made little excursions there, oftener than La Poplinière could have wished. At my good Madame Harenc's, whom I never have neglected, I became acquainted with d'Alembert, and the young Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, who both accompanied Madame du Défant, whenever she came to sup there. I here merely notice these very interesting people. I shall afterwards speak of them at leisure.

Another society, into which I was introduced, I do not recollect how, was that of the Baron de Holbach. It was there I first knew Diderot, Helvétius, Grimm, and J. J. Rousseau, before he had become a savage. Grimm, then the secretary and intimate friend of the young Count de Frise, the nephew of Mareschal Saxe, used to give us a dinner every week at his own house. At this bachelor's dinner reigned the most perfect freedom; but that was a dish of which Rousseau tasted but very temperately. No one ever observed more strictly than he the melancholy maxim of *living with his friends, as if they were one day to be his enemies*. When I first knew him, he had just gained the prize of eloquence at the academy of Dijon, with that fine sophism in which he has imputed to the sciences and the arts the natural effects of the prosperity and wealth of nations. Yet he had not then declared himself as he has since done, nor did he announce any ambition to form a sect. Either his pride was unborn, or he concealed it under the shew of a timid politeness, that was sometimes even obsequious, and bordering on humility. But, in his reserve, distrust was evidently visible; his eye secretly observed every thing with suspicious attention. He was very rarely affable, and never opened his heart. He was not the less amicably received; as we knew he indulged a restless self-love; tetchy, easily hurt, he was humoured, treated with the same attention, and the same delicacy, that we should use toward a vain and capricious beauty, whose favours we wished to obtain. He was then composing the music for the *Devin du Village*, and he sang to us at the harpsichord the airs he had



written. We were charmed with them ; we were not less so with the firm, animated, and profound manner of his first essay on eloquence. Nothing could be more sincere, I must acknowledge, than our consideration for his person, and our esteem for his talents. It was the recollection of these days that made me indignant against him, when I saw him, for silly trifles, or wrongs of his own creating, calumniate men who treated him so kindly, and would have been happy in his friendship. I have lived with them all their lives ; I shall have occasion to speak of their minds and their hearts. I never perceived in them any thing like the character which his evil genius has attributed to them.

For my part, the little time that we were together, in their society, passed between him and me coldly, without affection, and without aversion for each other ; the way in which we treated each other admitted neither of complaint nor of praise : and in what I have said, and in what I may still say of him, I feel myself perfectly free from all personality.

But the fruit I gathered from his society, and from his example, was a return of reflection on the imprudence of my youth. There, said I, is a man who has given himself time to think before he wrote ; and I, in the most difficult and the most perilous of arts, I have hastened to write almost before I had thought. Twenty years of study and meditation, in silence and retreat, have amassed, ripened, and fertilized his knowledge ; and I scatter my ideas when they are scarcely blown, and before they have acquired their vigour and their growth. Thus, in his first productions, there is an astonishing fulness, a perfect virility : and in mine all savours of the greenness and feebleness of a talent that study and reflection have not nourished long enough. My only excuse was my poverty, and the necessity of labouring incessantly and hastily to procure my subsistence. I resolved to extricate myself from this sad situation, were I even obliged to renounce poetry.

I had some access to the court ; and the removal of M. Orri had not taken from me all hope of fortune. The same woman, by whose influence he had been dismissed, was pleased with me for having more than once been the echo of the public voice in verses which celebrated what was worthy of praise in the reign of her lover. A little poem, that I had written on the establishment of the military school, a monument raised to the glory of the king by the bosom friends of Madame de Pompadour, had interested her, and installed me in her favour. The Abbé de Bernis and Duclos went together to see her every Sunday ; and as they had both some friendship for me, I used to go with them as a third. This woman, to whom the first nobility of the kingdom, and the princes of the blood themselves, paid their court at her toilet, a simple citizen, who had the weakness to be ambitious of pleasing the king, and the misfortune to succeed, was, in her elevation, the best woman in the world. She received us all three familiarly, although with evident shades of distinction. To one she said, speaking short and with a light air, *How do you do, Duclos ?* to another, in an air and tone more friendly, *how do you do, Abbé ?* giv-

ing him occasionally a little pat on the cheek ; and to me, more seriously, and in a lower voice, *how do you do*, Marmontel. The ambition of Duclos was to render himself important in his own province of Brittany ; the ambition of the Abbé de Bernis was to have a little lodging at the top of the Tuilleries, and a pension of fifty pounds on the privy purse ; my ambition was to be usefully occupied for myself and for the public, without depending on their caprice. The employment I solicited was assiduous and tranquil. " I feel that I have but an indifferent talent for poetry," said I to Madame de Pompadour ; " but I think I have sense and intelligence enough to fill an employment in the public offices ; and, whatever application it may require, I am capable of it. Persuade them to make trial of me, Madame ; I dare assure you that they shall be satisfied with me." She answered, " that I was born to be a man of letters ; that my disgust for poetry was want of courage ; that, instead of quitting the game, I should have taken my revenge, as Voltaire had more than once done, and, like him, rise from my fall by successful effort."

I consented, from complaisance to her, to exert myself on a new subject. But I chose one that was too simple, and too much above my force. The subjects afforded by history seemed to me exhausted : I found all the grand interests of the human heart, all the violent passions, all the tragic situations, in a word, all the great springs of terror and compassion employed before me by the masters of the art. I racked my brains to invent an action that should be new, and out of the common route. I thought I had found it in a subject purely of imagination, with which I was at first infatuated. It afforded an exhibition of great splendour (*les Funerailles de Sésostris* ;) it gave me great characters to paint in favourable contrast, and an intrigue so nicely veiled that it was impossible to foresee its solution. This it was that blinded me on the difficulties of an action without love, wholly composed of politics and morality, and which, to be sustained with warmth during five acts, required all the resources of poetic eloquence. I did all I could ; and, whether it were illusion, or excess of indulgence, I was persuaded by my friends that I had succeeded. Madame de Pompadour often asked me how I went on with my new piece. When it was finished, she desired to read it ; she made, in detail, some criticisms that were very just ; but, on the whole, it pleased her.

I here recollect an incident that perhaps may enliven for a moment the recital of my misfortunes. Whilst the manuscript of my tragedy was still in the hands of Madame de Pompadour, I presented myself one morning at her toilette, in the room that was crowded with a confux of courtiers, who had just been at the king's levee. She was surrounded by them ; and, whether she was displeased with some one near her, or whether she wished to divert the weariness that this circle occasioned her, as soon as she saw me : " I want to speak to you," said she to me ; and, quitting her toilette, she went into her cabinet, whither I followed her. It was simply to return me my manuscript, on which she had pencilled her notes. She was five or six minutes shewing me

the passages she had marked, and explaining to me her criticisms; whilst the whole circle of courtiers were standing round her toilette waiting for her. She re-appeared; and I, concealing my manuscript, went modestly to resume my place. I suspected the effect that this singular incident would produce; but the impression it made on the whole company far exceeded my expectation. All eyes were fixed on me; on every side I was addressed by little imperceptible salutations and gentle smiles of friendship; and, before I left the room, I was invited to dinner at least for the whole week. Even a titled man, decorated with the ribbon, with whom I had sometimes dined at M. de la Poplinière's, le M. D. S., standing by my side, took me by the hand, and whispered to me: "What! you will not acknowledge your old friends?" I bowed, confused at his meanness, and said to myself, "Ah! what then is favour, if its shade only gives me such singular importance?"

The players, as well as Madame de Pompadour, were seduced at the reading of my piece, by the beautiful morality with which I had decorated the last acts of it. But, on the stage, their feebleness was manifest, and it was the more sensibly felt, because I had written the first with more vehemence and warmth. My combat of generosity and virtue had nothing tragic. The public were weary of not being affected, and my piece fell. This time, I was convinced the public were right.

I returned home, determined to write no more for the stage; and I sent a note instantly, by express, to Madame de Pompadour, who was at Bellevue, to inform her of my misfortune, and to renew, very urgently, the request I had made, to obtain for me some employment, in which I might be more useful than in an art for which I was not born.

She was at table, with the king, when she received my letter; and the king having permitted her to read it; "The new piece is fallen," said she to him; "and do you know, sire, who it is that tells me so? The author himself. Unhappy young man! I would willingly have, at this moment, some place to offer him, that might serve to console him." Her brother, the marquis de Marigny, who was at this supper, said that he had a place of *secrétaire des bâtimens*, that he could give me, if she chose it. "Ah!" said she, "write to him then to-morrow, I intreat you." The king appeared satisfied with their doing me this service.

The letter, in which M. de Marigny offered me, in the most engaging and obliging manner, a place of little value, as he said, but tranquil, and which would leave me leisure to court the muses, caused an emotion of joy and gratitude, that I warmly expressed in my answer. I thought myself safe in port, after having been cast away, and I embraced the hospitable earth that assured me repose.

M. de la Poplinière did not learn without sorrow that I was about to leave him. In his complaints he repeated what he had so often said to me, that I ought not to have been uneasy about the future, and that it had been his intention to provide for it. I answered that, in renouncing the profession of a man of letters, my intention had not been to live as an idle and useless man;

but that I was not the less grateful for his kindness. Indeed, I should be most ungrateful, if, after having told the part he involuntarily had in the wrong I did myself, I did not add, that, in many other respects, the time I passed with him should be dear to my memory, as well by the sentiments of esteem and confidence that he himself shewed me, as by the kindness with which he inspired all those for me, who would hear him speak of my good disposition; for this, above all, was what he praised in me.

At his house succeeded, as in a moving picture, a variety of persons, different in manners, in mind, and in character. I frequently saw there the ambassadors from the different courts of Europe; and, from them, I gathered much information. It was there that I became acquainted with the Count de Kaunitz, then ambassador from the court of Vienna, and since the most celebrated statesman in Europe.

He had admitted me to his friendship. I used often to dine at his house, the palais Bourbon. He talked to me of Paris and Versailles, like a man who had observed them minutely. Yet I ought to confess that what struck me most in him was that delicacy and vanity which usually accompany effeminate minds. I supposed him more occupied with the care of his health, of his face, and particularly of his hair and his complexion, than with the interests of his court. I surprised him one day, on his return from hunting, plastering his face with the yolk of an egg, to take off the tan; and I learnt, a long time afterwards, from the Count de Par, his cousin, an ingenious plain man, that during the long and glorious ministry, in which he was the soul of the cabinet of Vienna, he had preserved, in his luxury, in his effeminacy, in all the minute care of his dress and his person, the same character which I had remarked in him. Of all the men I have seen in the world, it is he in whom I have been the most grossly deceived. Yet I remember some of his observations, that might have taught me the temper of his mind, and of his soul.

"What do they say of me in the society you frequent?" said he to me one day.—"They say that your excellency does not sustain the idea of the magnificence that they had conceived of you, on your arrival at Paris. The first embassy in Europe, a great fortune, a palace for your residence, the ostentatious pomp you had displayed on entering it, announced more splendor and luxury in your house, and in your manner of living. A sumptuous table, feasts, and assemblies, balls in particular, balls in your superb drawing-rooms; these were what they expected, and they see nothing of all these. You frequent the society of financiers' wives, like a private man, and you neglect the nobility of the city and of the court."—"My dear Marmontel," said he, "I am here only for two objects; for the affairs of my sovereign, which I transact properly, and my pleasures; and on this article, I have only to consult myself. Parade would weary me, and be a burthen; it is for this reason that I avoid it. Of all the intriguing women at Versailles, there is not one worth the trouble of gaining. What should I do with those women? Set down at their *tri*, or their dull *cavagnole*? I have two persons to court, the king and his mis-

ness : I am well with them both." These were not the remarks of a frivolous and foolish man.

His private dinners were very good : Merci, Staremborg, Sec-kendorf, his then secretaries of legation, or rather his pupils, treated me with kindness ; we talked gaily together, and a flask of Tokay animated the close of the repast.

A man very different from the Count de Kaunitz, more friendly, and more engaging, was Lord Albemarle, the English ambassador, who died at Paris, as much regretted among us as in his own country. He was, in the highest sense of the phrase, an honest man ; noble, feeling, generous, full of loyalty, frankness, politeness, and kindness ; and he united what the two characters of French and English have most worthy and most estimable. He had an accomplished girl for his mistress, to whom envy never imputed any other fault than that of having yielded to him. I made a friend of her ; it was the sure way of making a friend of Lord Albemarle. The name of this charming girl was Gaucher ; in her childhood she had been called Lolote, and this was still her name of endearment. It was to her that her lover one day said, as she was looking stedfastly at a star, "*Don't look at it so, my love ; I cannot give it to you.*" Never was love more delicately expressed. That of Lord Albemarle honoured its object by the highest esteem, and the tenderest respect ; and he was not the only one who had these sentiments for her. As prudent as she was beautiful, one man only had ever succeeded in winning her love ; and the most excusable of the errors, into which extreme youth leads innocence, had assumed, in her, a character of nobleness and modesty that vice never possessed. She was faithful, modest, and disinterested. Nothing was wanting to her love, to be virtuous, but legal form. These two lovers would have been the most perfect models of wife and husband.

The character of Mademoiselle Gaucher was ingenuously expressed in her whole person. She had, in her beauty, something so romantic and fabulous, that till then it had been seen only in idea. Her figure had the majesty of the cedar, the suppleness of the poplar ; her gait was indolent ; but in the negligence of her carriage there was a simplicity full of seemliness and grace. Her image was present to my fancy when I formerly painted the shepherdess of the Alps ; and I thought I imitated it. A lively imagination and a cool judgment gave to her mind very much the tone of Montaigne. His were her favourite works, and her habitual reading ; her language was imbued with them ; it had their simplicity, their colouring, their flow, very often their energetic turn and happiness of expression.

As much as it is possible to be charmed with a woman, without being in love with her, so much was I charmed with Mademoiselle Gaucher. After the conversation of Voltaire, the most enchanting to me was hers. We became intimate friends from the moment we knew each other.

Lord Albemarle died : he had secured to her, I believe, two hundred and fifty pounds a-year ; that was all her fortune. The grief she felt at his death was deep but courageous ; and while I

suffered with her, I aided her to bear her misfortune with becoming firmness. All the friends of Lord Albemarle were hers ; they all remained faithful to her. The Duke de Biron, the Marquis de Castries, and some others of the same class, composed her society. Happy had she not been thrown, by a kind of fatality, out of this situation, with which she was content, into another, for which she was not formed.

Her health had become feeble ; her friends were uneasy at it, and she was advised to go to Barège. In going and returning by Montauban, she was treated with particular attention by the commandant, the Count de Héronville ; and on arriving at Paris she received from him a letter written nearly in these words : " I am poisoned : my servants are all poisoned too. Come, Mademoiselle, hasten to my aid, and bring with you a physician. I have no confidence but in you." She set off in a post-chaise with an eminent physician, and M. de Héronville was saved. He had already felt that enthusiasm for her which in lively old men very much resembles love. The service she had rendered him did but increase it. He had seen her at the head of his household, reestablishing in it order and calmness, restoring hope to his domestics, who were tortured by the action of the verdegrease, encouraging himself, and, in concert with Dr. Malouet, doing the office of a moral physician. So much zeal, and so much courage, had filled him with admiration ; and as soon as he was out of danger, he knew not how to express his gratitude better than by saying to her as Medor did to Angelique—

To serve you is my only desire,  
'Tis a hope I delight to renew,  
'Tis you who've preserv'd me my life,  
I cherish it only for you.

She was prudent enough at first to resist his intreaties ; but she at last had the weakness to yield, on condition that their marriage should be kept secret : it was so for some time, but she became a mother ; it was necessary to make it public.

The only prudent conduct for both of them to observe (and this was the advice I gave my friend) would then have been to confine themselves to a society of men, chosen as their mutual inclination guided, to render this society agreeable, and, if possible, attracting to women, or to be contented without them, and not to pretend to think of them. Madame d'Héronville felt perfectly that this conduct was the only one that suited her. But her husband, impatient to introduce her into society, would persist in doing violence to public opinion. Unhappy imprudence ! he ought to have known that this opinion was interwoven with the dearest interests of women ; and that, already too indignant that mistresses should steal from them their husbands and their lovers, they were well determined never to suffer them to usurp their condition, and enjoy it amongst them. He flattered himself that, in favour of his wife, so charming a character, such rare merit, so many estimable qualities, so much decency and prudence in her

frailty itself, would make it forgotten. He was cruelly undeceived in his mad mistake. She endured humiliations, and she died of grief.

It was likewise at the house of M. de la Poplinière that I became acquainted with the family of Chalut, in whose praise I shall often have occasion to speak in these memoirs, and whom I have seen annihilated.

Finally, I owed to the vicinity of the country house, in which I was, to that of Madame de Tencin, at Passy, the advantage of seeing that extraordinary woman occasionally *tête-à-tête*. I had refused the honour of being admitted to the dinners she gave to men of letters; but, when she came to repose in her retreat, I used to go and pass with her the moments she was alone; and I cannot express to what degree I was deceived by her air of carelessness and indolence. Madame de Tencin, who, to obtain favour from the state, could put more springs in action both in town and at court than any other person in the kingdom, was to me only a lazy old woman. "You are not fond of these parties of men of wit," said she. "Their presence intimidates you; well! come and talk with me in my solitude; you will there be more at your ease; and the simplicity of your disposition will accommodate itself better to my dull good sense." She made me tell her the history of my life, from my infancy, entered into all my interests, was touched at all my sorrows, reasoned with me on my views and my hopes, and appeared to have nothing else in her head than my cares. Ah! how much acuteness of intellect, what suppleness and activity, did this careless air, this appearance of calm and leisure conceal from me! I still smile at the simplicity with which I exclaimed on quitting her; *What a good simple creature!* The fruit I gathered from her conversations, without perceiving it, was a more sound and perfect knowledge of the world. For instance, I remember two pieces of advice she gave me: one was to secure to myself a livelihood independent of literary successes, and to put into this lottery only the overplus of my time. "Wo to him," said she, "who depends wholly on his pen; nothing is more casual. The man who makes shoes is sure of his wages; the man who writes a book or a tragedy is never sure of any thing." Her other counsel was to seek friends among women rather than among men. "For by means of women," said she, "you may do what you please with men; and then these are either too dissipated, or too much occupied with their own personal interests, to attend to yours; whereas women think of your interest, be it only out of indolence. Mention this evening to a woman, who is your friend, an affair that intimately concerns you; to-morrow, at her spinning-wheel, at her embroidery, you will find her thinking of you, and torturing her fancy to invent some means of serving you. But be careful to be nothing more than the friend of her whom you think may be useful to you; for, between lovers, where once there happens any cloud, dispute, or rupture, all is lost. Be, therefore, assiduous to her, complaisant, gallant even, if you will, but nothing more; you understand me." Thus, in all our conversations, the plainness of her language im-

posed on me so well, that I never took her subtle intellect for any thing but good sense.

An acquaintance of another kind took place at the same time, between me and the *intendans des Menus Plaisirs*. It cost me dear, as will be seen in the sequel. For the present, I will only mention how it arose. Quinault was one of my favourite poets. Sensible to the harmony of his beautiful verses, charmed with the elegant facility of his style, I never read the beautiful scenes of *Proserpine*, of *Thesee*, and of *Armide*, without feeling a strong desire to write an opera, nor without some hope of writing like him; vain presumption of youth! but which spoke the praises of the poet that inspired me; for one of the characters of the truly beautiful, as Horace says, is to be in appearance easy to imitate, but, in fact, inimitable:

———Ut sibi quivis

Speret idem, sudet multum, frustra que laboret  
Ausus idem.

Besides, I was passing my life with Rameau; I saw him labouring at wretched poetry; and I should have been happy to have given him better.

Such was the disposition of my mind, when, at the birth of the Duke of Burgundy, the provost of merchants, Bernage, came to propose to me, at Passy, to write an opera with Rameau, relative to this happy event, and which should be susceptible of show and splendor. It was necessary that the words and the music should be composed hastily, and within a given time.

You may suppose that we both laboured to sketch an opera. However, as *Acanthe* and *Céphise* was an imposing exhibition, the varied motion on the stage, the beauty of the decorations, some great effects of harmony, and perhaps some interest in the piece itself, sustained it. It was played, I think, fourteen times; and that was much for a bespoken work.

I wrote somewhat better two detached acts that Rameau had again the kindness to set to music, *la Guirlande* and *les Sybarites*. They both of them succeeded. But at our concerts I heard pieces of melody, after which French music appeared to me heavy and monotonous. Those airs, those duos, that measured recitative with which the Italians compose the lyric scene, charmed my ear and ravished my soul. I studied their forms, I attempted to bend and accommodate our language to them, and I wanted to persuade Rameau to undertake, with me, to transport to our stage those riches and those beauties. But Rameau, already an old man, was not disposed to change his manner; and determined to see nothing but vice and abuse in that of the Italians, he feigned to despise it. The most beautiful air of Leo, of Vinci, of Pergolese, or of Jomelli, made him tremble with impatience: it was not till long afterward that I found composers who would understand and second me. However, from that time I was known at the opera among the amateurs, at the head of whom, for singing, dancing, or voluptuousness, the *intendans des Menus Plaisirs* were distinguished in the green-room. I engaged in their society by that



gentle inclination that naturally leads us to enjoy life ; and their company had the greater charms for me, because it offered, in the bosom of joy, lines of character of striking originality, and sallies of the most tasteful and delicate gaiety. Cury, the chief of the joyous band, was a man of talent, a merry companion, acute in his satire, with ironical gravity, and rather facetious than malicious. The Epicurean Tribou, a disciple of father Porée, and one of his favourite pupils, afterward engaged at the opera, and then having resigned the scene to Géliote, living independent and content with little, charmed us in his old age by an Anacreontic humour that never forsook him. He is the only man I have seen take leave gaily of the pleasures of youth and manhood, suffering himself to glide gently down the current of life, and preserving in his decline that philosophy, *green, gay, and open-hearted*, that Montaigne himself attributed only to youth. A character of another stamp, and as engaging in its way, was that of Géliote : gentle, good-humoured, *amistoux*, to use one of his provincial words that paints him in his native colours, he bore in his front the serenity of happiness, and in breathing it himself, he inspired it. Indeed, were I asked who is the most completely happy man I have seen in my life, I should answer ...Géliote. Born in obscurity, in his youth a singing-boy in a church at Toulouse, he had come, at one bound, to try his talents at the opera, and he had met with the most brilliant success : from that moment he had been, and still was, the idol of the public. They leapt for joy when he appeared on the stage ; they listened to him with the intoxication of pleasure ; and applause always marked his pauses. His voice was the rarest that had been heard, for its volume and its fulness, as well as for its silvery clearness. He was neither handsome nor well made ; but, in order to become both, he had only to sing ; you would have said that the eyes as well as the ears were charmed. Young women were mad after him : you might see them leaning half out of their boxes, exposing to public view the excess of their emotion ; and more than one of the most lovely of them were pleased to express it to him. Being a good musician, his talent gave him no pain, and his profession had for him none of its vexations. Beloved, esteemed by his comrades, with whom he was on the footing of amicable politeness, without familiarity, he lived like a man of the world, received and welcomed every where. First it was his singing that all were desirous of hearing ; and, to afford that pleasure, he had a complaisance that charmed as much as his voice. He had made it his study to choose and to learn the most beautiful of our songs ; and he sang them to his guitar with delicious taste. But, in him, the singer was soon forgotten, in order to enjoy the engaging qualities of the man ; and his wit, his character, made him as many friends in society as he already had admirers. He had friends in every class, from citizens to the highest nobility ; he was every where plain, gentle and modest, and was every where in his place. He had acquired by his talent, and by the favours it had procured him, a comfortable little fortune ; and the first use he had made of it was to extend his comforts to his family. In the offices and cabinets of the ministers he

enjoyed a very considerable credit ; for it was the credit that pleasure gives, and he employed it to render essential services to the province in which he was born. He was therefore adored in it. Every year he was permitted, in summer, to take a journey there ; and from Paris to Pau his route was known ; the time of his passing was marked from town to town ; fêtes every where awaited him ; and, on this point, I ought to mention what I knew of him at Toulouse, before my departure. He had two friends in that city, to whom no one was ever preferred : one was the taylor, at whose house he had lodged ; and the other his music master, while he was a singing boy. The nobility, the parliament, disputed with each other the second supper that Géliote should make at Toulouse ; but, for the first, they knew it was invariably reserved for his two friends. A man of intrigue, as much so and more than he could have wished, he was renowned for his discretion ; and, of his numerous conquests, none have been known, but those who chose to proclaim themselves. Finally, amid so much prosperity, he has never excited envy ; and I never heard it said that Géliote had an enemy.

The rest of the society of the *Menus Plaisirs* were simply men of pleasure ; and among these I may say that I occupied my corner with some distinction.

Imagine me now, just after making a jovial dinner with these gentlemen, passing into the school of philosophers ; and gliding, at the opera buffa, newly arrived from Italy, into the queen's famous corner, among the Diderots, the d'Alemberts, the Buffons, the Turgots, the d'Holbachs, the Helvétiuses, the Rousseaus, all burning with zeal for Italian music, and full of ardour for raising that immense edifice, the *Encyclopédie*, whose foundations they were laying ; and you may say of me, in miniature, what Horace said of Aristippus :

*Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res.*

Yes, I confess, all was welcome to me, pleasure, study, the table, philosophy. I had a taste for wisdom with the wise ; but I abandoned myself willingly to folly with the foolish. My character was still floating, variable and discordant. I adored virtue ; I yielded to the example and charm of vice. I was pleased, I was happy, when, in the little chamber of d'Alembert, at his good old glazier's, making a frugal dinner tête-à-tête with him, I heard him, after having been puzzled all the morning at his mathematics, talk to me like a man of letters, full of taste, of mind, and of knowledge : or, when on morality, displaying to me the wisdom of a ripe intellect, and the gaiety of a free and young soul, he surveyed the world with the eye of Democritus, and made me laugh at the expense of folly and of pride. I was happy, too, but in a lighter and more fugitive way, when, surrounded by a flight of games and pleasures just escaped from behind the scenes, at the supper of our amateurs, among the nymphs and the graces, sometimes too of the Bacchants, I only heard the praises of love and of wine. I quitted all this for Versailles. But, before I left the chiefs of the enterprise of the *Encyclopédie*, I engaged to contri-

bute to it in the *belles lettres*; and, encouraged by the praises they bestowed on my labours, I have done more than either they or I expected.

Voltaire was then absent from Paris; he was in Prussia. The thread of my narrative has appeared to separate me from my connection with him; but, till his departure, it had remained the same; and the vexations he experienced seemed to have tightened the bond of our friendship. Of these vexations, the most lively for the moment was that of the death of the Marchioness Duc d'Aletolet. But, to be sincere, I recognized on this occasion, as I often had done, the mobility of his soul. When I went to express to him the part I took in his affliction, "Come," said he on seeing me, "come and share my sorrow. I have lost my illustrious friend; I am in despair; I am inconsolable." I, to whom he had often said that she was like a fury that haunted his steps, and who knew that in their disputes they had more than once been at daggers drawn, I let him weep, and seemed to sympathise with him. Solely to make him perceive some motive of consolation in the very cause of her death, I asked him what she died of. "Of what! don't you know? Ah! my dear friend! the brute has killed her. He got her with child." It was St. Lambert, his rival, of whom he spoke: and yet he was exhausting language in the praises of that incomparable woman, and redoubling his tears and his sobs. At this moment arrives the intendant Chauvelin, who tells him some ridiculous story, and Voltaire laughs with him immediately. I laughed too, as I went away, to see in this great man the facility of a child, in passing from one extreme to another in the passions that agitated him. One only was fixed in him, and, as it were, inherent in his soul; it was ambition and love of glory; and, of all that flatters and nourishes this passion, nothing was indifferent to him.

It was not enough for him to be the most illustrious of men of letters; he wanted to be a courtier. From his earliest youth he had assumed the flattering habit of living with the great. First, Marshal Villars, the grand prior De Vendôme, and afterward the Duke de Richelieu, the Duke de la Vallière, the Boufflers, the Montmorency, had been his companions. He supped with them habitually; and you know with what respectful familiarity he had the art of writing and speaking to them. Verses lightly and delicately flattering, a conversation not less seducing than his poetry, made him beloved and welcomed among this nobility. Now, these noblemen were admitted to the king's suppers; and why was he not invited also? This was one of his desires. He recollected the reception that Lewis the Great had given to Boileau and Racine; he said that Horace and Virgil had the honour of approaching Augustus; that the *Æneid* had been read in the cabinet of Livia. Were Addison and Prior more worthy than he? And had they not both been honourably employed in their country, one in the ministry, and the other as ambassador? The place of historiographer was already a mark of confidence in him, and who before him had filled it with so much glory? He had bought a place of gentleman in ordinary of the king's chamber: this place, com-

monly very inactive, gave, however, the right of being sent to foreign courts on light commissions, and he had flattered himself that, for a man like him, these commissions would not be limited to bare compliments of felicitation and condolence. He wanted, as we say, to make his way at court; and, when he had a project in his head, he persisted in it obstinately: one of his maxims was these words of the Evangelist: *Regnum calorum vim patitur et violenti rapiunt illud*. He therefore employed all the means he could devise to approach the king.

When Madame d'Estioles, afterward Marchioness de Pompadour, was announced as the king's mistress, and even before she was declared so, he was eager in paying his court to her. He easily succeeded in pleasing her; and, while he celebrated the victories of the king, he flattered his mistress by writing pretty verses to her. He was persuaded that, through her, he should obtain the favour of being admitted to the little cabinet suppers; and I am persuaded that she wished it.

Transplanted to the court, and ignorant enough of the character and tastes of the king, she had at first hoped to amuse him by her talents. On a private theatre she used to play before him little acts of operas, some of which were written for her, and in which her playing, her voice, her singing were justly applauded. Voltaire, in favour with her, took it into his head to wish to direct these performances. The alarm spread to the camp of gentlemen of the bed-chamber and intendants *des menus-plaisirs*. It was trespassing on their rights; and a league was instantly formed among them, to remove from the court a man who would have governed them all, if he had pleased the king as well as his mistress. But they knew the king did not like him, and that, by his eagerness to increase his importance, he only increased the prejudices against him. But the king, little touched with the praises he had lavished on him in his panegyric, only saw in him an impious philosopher, and an ambitious flatterer. He had at last consented, with great difficulty, that he should be received at the academy. Without reckoning the friends of religion, who were not the friends of Voltaire, there were many about the king who were jealous and envious of the favour they saw him courting, and they were very careful to censure what he did to please. In their mind, the poem of Fontenoy was only a cold gazette; the panegyric on the king was inanimate, wanting colouring, and without eloquence. The verses to Madame de Pompadour were taxed with impropriety and indiscretion; and in this verse in particular—

Be both without an enemy,  
And keep your conquests both,

they persuaded the king that it was indecorous to put him on an equality with his mistress.

At the marriage of the Dauphin with the Infanta of Spain, it was easy to animadvert on the absurdity and folly of having given, as a play to the Infanta, that *Princesse de Navarre*, which really was not calculated to succeed. I do not say the same of *Le Temple*

*de la Gloire*: the idea of it was grand, the subject well conceived and nobly executed. The third act, of which Trajan was the hero, presented a flattering allusion for the king; it was a hero, just, humane, generous, pacific, and worthy the love of the world, to whom the temple of glory was open. Voltaire doubted not but that the king would recognize himself in this eulogy. After the play, he met him in his way out; and seeing that the king passed without saying any thing to him, he took the liberty of asking him, *Is Trajan satisfied?* Trajan, surprised and displeased, that he should have dared to interrogate him, answered by a cold silence; and the whole court thought Voltaire very wrong for having dared to question the king.

To remove him, it was only necessary to detach him from the mistress; and the way they took to do this was to oppose to him Crébillon.

Crébillon, old and poor, was living obscurely in the vilest part of the Marais, labouring by starts at that *Cataline* which he had announced for ten years, and of which he read here and there some bits of scenes that were thought admirable. His age, his successes, his manners somewhat rough, his soldier-like character, his truly tragical face, the air, the imposing though simple tone in which he recited his harsh and inharmonious verses, the vigor, the energy he gave to his expression, all concurred to strike the mind with a sort of enthusiasm. I have heard applauded with transport, by men who were not fools, these verses, which he had put into the mouth of Cicero—

Cataline, I think you are not guilty;  
But if you be, you are detestable.  
And I see in you only the talents and renown  
Of the greatest of men, or the greatest of villains.

The name of Crébillon was the rallying word for the enemies of Voltaire. *Elèctre* and *Radamiste*, which were sometimes still played, drew but thin houses; all the rest of Crébillon's tragedies were forgotten, while those of Voltaire, *Oedipe*, *Alzire*, *Mahomet*, *Zaire*, *Merope*, occupied the theatre in all the splendor of full success. The partizans of old Crébillon were few, but noisy; and they did not cease to call him the Sophocles of our age; and, even among men of letters, Marivaux used to say, that all the fine wit of Voltaire must bow before the genius of Crébillon.

It was mentioned before Madame de Pompadour, that this great neglected man was suffered to grow old without support, because he was without intrigue. This was touching her in her most sensible part. "What do you say?" cried she: "Crébillon is poor and forsaken!" She instantly obtained for him from the king a pension of one hundred pounds from the privy purse.

Crébillon was eager to go and thank his benefactress. A slight indisposition kept her in bed, when he was announced to her: she desired he might come in. The sight of this fine old man affected her; she received him very kindly. He was moved by it; and, as he leaned over her bed, to kiss her hand, the king appeared.

“ Ah ! madame,” cried Crébillon, “ the king has surprised us : I am lost.” This sally, in an old man of eighty, pleased the king. The fortune of Crébillon was decided. All the *menus-plaisirs* launched into praises of his genius and his manners. “ He had dignity,” said they, “ but no pride, and still less of vain glory. His poverty was a proof of his disinterestedness. He was a venerable character, and truly the man whose genius honoured the reign of the king.” *Cataline* was mentioned as the wonder of the age. Madame de Pampadour wished to hear it. A day was fixed for the reading ; the king, present, but invisible, heard it. It had complete success ; and on its first performance, Madame de Pompadour, accompanied by a croud of courtiers, attended with the most lively interest. A little time afterward Crébillon obtained the favour of an edition of his works from the press of the Louvre, at the expense of the royal treasury. From that time Voltaire was coldly received ; and he declined going to court. You know the connection he had formed with the Prince Royal of Prussia. This prince expressed to him the same kindness when he became king ; and the infinitely flattering manner in which Voltaire answered it might well have contributed secretly to alienate from him the mind of Lewis the Fifteenth. The king of Prussia, who corresponded regularly with Voltaire, had not ceased, since his accession to the crown, to invite him to go and see him, and the favour which Crébillon enjoyed at court, having cut him to the quick, decided his journey. But, before he set off, he wished to revenge himself for this vexation, and he undertook it like a great man ; he had attacked his adversary, hand to hand, to try his force with him on the subjects he had treated, abstaining only from *Radamiste*, *Atrée*, and *Pyrrhus* ; from one doubtless from respect ; from the other, out of horror ; and from the third, out of disdain for so ungrateful and fantastic a subject.

He began by *Semiramis* ; and the grand and tragic manner of the plot of it, the sombre, stormy, and terrible colouring he spread over it, the magic style he employed, the religious and fearful majesty with which he filled it, the afflicting scenes and situations he drew from it, in fine, the art with which he contrived to prepare, establish and sustain the marvellous, were well calculated to annihilate the cold and feeble *Semiramis* of Crébillon. But the theatre was then not susceptible of a subject of this kind. The stage was obstructed by a crowd of spectators, some placed on seats raised one above another, others standing at the bottom of the stage, and along the side scenes ; so that the affrighted *Semiramis*, and the shade of Ninus coming from his tomb, were obliged to penetrate through a thick line of *petits-maitres*. This impropriety threw ridicule on the gravity of the theatrical action. Without illusion there is no interest, and without probability there is no illusion : thus this piece, the master-piece of Voltaire, as a work of genius, had, in its novelty, so little success, that it might be said to fail. Voltaire shook with grief ; but he was not disheartened. He wrote *Oreste* after Sophocles, and he rose above Sophocles himself in the part of Electra, and in the art of saving the indecorum and hardness of the character of Clytemnestra. But, in the fifth act, at the moment

of the catastrophe, he had not yet sufficiently enfeebled the horror of parricide; and Crébillon's party being there, every thing but benevolent, whatever could give a hold to criticism was caught at with murmurs, and turned into derision. The performance was interrupted at every instant; and this piece, which has since been justly applauded, was hooted. I was in the amphitheatre, more dead than alive. Voltaire came in there also, and, at the moment when the pit were turning a pathetic line into ridicule, he rose and cried out, *Ah, Barbarians, that's a line of Sophocles!*

Lastly, he gave *Rome Sauvée*; and, in the characters of Cicero, of Cæsar, of Cato, he revenged the dignity of the Roman senate, which Crébillon had degraded, by making all these great characters subordinate to that of Catiline. I remember when he had just written the beautiful scenes of Cicero and Cæsar with Catiline, he read them to me with a perfection to which no actor ever approached; simply, nobly, without any affectation, better than I had ever heard him read. "Ah!" said I, "your conscience is quiet in these verses; and therefore you do not flourish them, and you are right; you never made any more beautiful." This piece, in the opinion of well informed men, had the full success of merit; but it was not calculated to move the multitude; and that eloquence of style, that talent of having so learnedly observed the manners, and painted the characters, were lost on the mass of the public. Thus, with prodigious advantages over his rival, Voltaire had the pain of seeing the triumph disputed with him, and even refused.

These disappointments determined his journey into Prussia. One difficulty only still retarded it; and the way in which that was removed is curious enough, to amuse you for a moment.

The difficulty consisted in the expenses of the journey, about which Frederick suffered himself to be a little baited. He was willing to defray Voltaire; and for that purpose he consented to give him a thousand pounds. But Madame Denis wanted to accompany her uncle, and for this additional expense Voltaire asked for another thousand pounds. This was what the King of Prussia would not listen to. "I shall be very happy," said he in his answer, "that Madame Denis accompany you; but I do not ask it." "Observe," said Voltaire to me, "this meanness in a king! He has barrels of gold, and he will not give a thousand poor pounds for the pleasure of seeing Madame Denis at Berlin! he shall give them, or I myself will not go." A comical incident happened to finish this dispute. One morning, as I was going to see him, I found his friend Thiriot in the garden of the Palais-Royal, and as I was always on the watch for literary news, I asked him if he had heard any. "Yes," said he, "there is most curious news: you are going to M. de Voltaire's, and there you shall hear it; for I am going there as soon as I have taken my coffee."

Voltaire was writing in his bed when I went in: in his turn he asked me, "What's the news?" "I know none," said I, "but Thiriot, whom I have met in the Palais-Royal, says he has something very interesting to tell you. He is coming."

"Well, Thiriot," said he, "you have some curious news to tell us?" "Oh! very curious, and that will please you particularly," answered Thiriot, with his sardonic laugh, and the nasal twang of a Capuchin. "Let us hear what you have to tell?" "I have to tell you that Arnaud-Baculard is arrived at Potsdam, and that the King of Prussia has received him with open arms." "With open arms!" "That Arnaud has presented him with an epistle."—"Very bombastical and very insipid?" "Not at all, very fine, so fine that the king has answered it by another epistle." "The King of Prussia an epistle to Arnaud! No, no, Thiriot; they have been making a joke of you." "I don't know what you call a joke, but I have the two epistles in my pocket." "Let us see; quick; let me read these master-pieces of poetry. What insipidity! what meanness! how egregiously stupid!" said he, in reading the epistle of Arnaud: then, passing to that of the king, he read a moment in silence, and with an air of pity. But when he came to these verses—

"Voltaire's a setting sun;  
But you are in your dawn;"

He started up, and jumped from his bed, bounding with rage: "Voltaire a setting sun, and Baculard in his dawn! and it is a king who writes this enormous folly! let him think only of reigning."

It was with difficulty that Thiriot and I could prevent ourselves from bursting into laughter, to see Voltaire in his shirt, dancing with passion, and addressing himself to the king of Prussia. "I'll go," said he, "yes, I'll go, and teach him to know men;" and from that moment his journey was decided. I have suspected that the King of Prussia intentionally gave him this spur; and without that I doubt whether he would have gone, so angry was he at the refusal of the thousand pounds, not at all out of avarice, but out of indignation at not having obtained what he asked.

Obstinate to excess by character and by system, he had even in little things an incredible repugnance to yield and to renounce what he had resolved on. I again saw a singular instance of it just before his departure. He had taken a fancy to carry a cutlass with him on his journey, and one morning, when I was at his house, a bundle of them was brought, that he might choose one. He chose it. But the cutler wanted twenty shillings for it, and Voltaire took it into his head that he would give but fifteen. He then begins to calculate in detail what it may be worth; he adds, that the cutler bears in his face the character of an honest man, and that with this good faith written on his forehead, he will confess that the instrument will be well paid at fifteen shillings. The cutler accepts the eulogy that he is pleased to make on his face, but he answers that, as an honest man, he has but one word; that he asks no more than the thing is worth, and that, were he to sell it at a lower price, he should wrong his children. "What, you have children, have you?" asked Voltaire.—"Yes, Sir, I have five, three boys and two girls, the youngest of whom is just twelve."—"Well! we will think about placing your boys and



marrying your girls. I have friends in the treasury ; I have some credit in the public offices : but let us finish this little affair : here are your fifteen shillings ; say no more about it." The good cutler was confused in thanking Voltaire for the protection with which he was pleased to honour him ; but he still kept to his first word about the price of the cutlass, and did not abate one farthing. I abridge this scene, which lasted a quarter of an hour by the turns of eloquence and seduction that Voltaire employed in vain, not to save five shillings, that he would have given to a beggar, but to give to his will the empire of persuasion. He was obliged to yield ; and, with a troubled, indignant, confused air, he threw the crown upon the table that he relinquished so unwillingly. The cutler, when he had got his money, returned him thanks for his favours, and went away. " I am very glad," said I in a low voice, as I saw him go out.—" Of what ?" said Voltaire, angrily, " What are you glad of ?"—" That this honest man's family is no longer to be pitied. His sons will soon be placed ; his daughters married ; and he, in the mean time, has sold his cutlass for what he wanted ; and you have paid it in spite of all your eloquence."—" And this is what you are glad of, you obstinate Limosin ?" " Oh ! yes : I am quite pleased ; if he had yielded to you, I believe I should have beaten him."—" Do you know," said he, laughing in his sleeve, after a moment's silence, " that if Molière had been witness to such a scene, he would have turned it to some profit ?" " Indeed," said I, " it would have been the fellow to that of M. Dimanche." It was thus that with me his anger, or rather his petulance, always terminated in gentleness and friendship.

As I was in his secret with respect to the king of Prussia, and as I imagined myself too in that of the king, on the little sincerity there was in his caresses, I had some presentiment of the dissatisfaction they would both have on seeing each other near. A soul so imperious and a mind so ardent could scarcely be compatible, and I hoped to see Voltaire soon return more discontented with Germany than he was with his own country. But the new vexation he experienced, on going to take leave of the king, and the anger he expressed at it, no longer left me that consoling hope. As gentleman in ordinary of the king's chamber, he thought he might venture to ask his orders for the King of Prussia ; but the king, instead of answering, abruptly turned his back on him ; and he, in his indignation, as soon as he was out of the kingdom, sent him back his warrant of historiographer of France, and accepted, without his consent, the cross of the Order of Merit, with which the King of Prussia decorated him, to despoil him of it a short time afterward.

The example of so many crosses and vexations, in the life of this great man, only served to render more fearful to me the career of letters in which I was engaged, and more gentle the obscure repose I was going to enjoy at Versailles.

Here, thank Heaven ! finish the errors of my youth ; here I begin a course of life, less dissipated, more prudent, more equal, and above all, less exposed to the tempest of the passions ; here,

in short, my character, too long mobile and unsteady, takes a little consistency, and my reason, on a solid base, will be able to exert itself in silence to regulate my morals.

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BOOK V.

AFTER having seen M. de Marigny, my first care, on arriving at Versailles, was to go and thank Madame de Pompadour. She was pleased to say that she was happy to see me composed, and added, with an air of kindness, "Men of letters adopt a system of equality which often makes them forgetful of decorum; I hope, Marmontel, that, with respect to my brother, you will always remember it." I assured her that my feelings accorded with my duties.

I was already acquainted with M. de Marigny; having met him in the society of the intendants *des Menus-Plaisirs*; and I had learned from them what kind of a man he was to whom his sister had recommended me never to be wanting in respect. As to intention, I was very sure of myself; gratitude alone would have inspired me with all the deference for him that my office and his required: but, to intention it was necessary to add the most scrupulous care, to gratify in him a captious self-love; jealous, susceptible to excess of distrust and suspicion. The weakness of fearing lest any one should not esteem him enough, or should, maliciously and enviously say all that might be said of his birth and fortune, was so embarrassing to him, that, if a few words were but whispered in his presence, he took the alarm. Attentive to watch the opinion that was entertained of him, it often happened that he spoke of himself with a feigned humility, to try if his auditors would be pleased at his undervaluing himself; and then, if the least smile, the least equivocal word escaped, the wound was deep and without remedy. With all the essential qualities of an honest man, even with some of the qualities of an engaging man; with talents, some cultivation, an enlightened taste in the arts, which he had made his study (for that had been the object of his journey into Italy), with frankness, rectitude, and singular correctness of morals, he would be as interesting as he was estimable. But his temper spoiled all, and sometimes betrayed him into rudeness and abruptness.

You may conceive, my dear children, what care it required to be always in favour with a man of this character. But I knew him; and by this knowledge I governed myself. Beside, either designedly or without intention, by his example, he indicated to me, the manner in which he wished me to behave to him. Were we alone? his air was friendly, free, gay; in short, the air of the society in which we had lived together. Were we before witnesses, and, above all, were these witnesses artists? he spoke to me with esteem, with an air of affability; but, in his politeness, the gravity of the placeman and the superior was sensibly predominant.

Hence I took my cue. In myself I made the distinction between the secretary *des batimens* and the man of letters and the man of the world, and in public I gave to the two academies, of which he was the chief, and to all the artists employed under his orders, an example of the respect we all owed to his place. At his audiences, no one was more becomingly reserved in his behaviour and language than myself. Tête-à-tête with him, or in the society of our common friends, I resumed that simplicity of manner which was natural to me; but neither my manner nor my tone was ever familiar. As jocularity could never be indulged between us on an equal footing, I good-humouredly declined it. He had in his mind a certain turn of pleasantry that was not always sufficiently delicate and tasteful, and which he loved to indulge; but this was a game at which no one could play with him. No wag ever took a joke so ill. No stroke of railery, however gentle, could touch without wounding him. I perceived therefore that with him I could never exceed a moderate gaiety, and I never went beyond it. On his part, perceiving some delicacy in my reserve, he was always pleased to adapt his language to mine. He only appeared desirous of sometimes learning my sentiments and opinion of what closely concerned him. For instance, when I went to congratulate him on his having obtained the cross of the order of the Holy Ghost, he said, "M. Marmontel, the king has ennobled me." I answered, as I really thought, "that his nobleness was in his soul, and was fully equivalent to that of blood." Another time, returning from the play, he told me that he had passed there a most painful moment; that, as he was sitting in one of the boxes at the theatre, highly entertained by a little piece they were performing, he suddenly heard one of the characters, a drunken soldier, exclaim: "What, I've a pretty sister, and shall get nothing by her, when so many others make their fortunes by their great-grand-cousins!" "Figure to yourself," added he, "my embarrassment, and my confusion! Fortunately the pit took no notice of me."—"Sir," answered I, "you had nothing to fear; you justify so well what has been done for you, that no one thinks of objecting to it." And indeed I saw him fill his place so worthily, that favour, when applied to him, appeared to me to be but common equity.

In this manner I was five years under his orders, without the smallest dissatisfaction either on his part or mine; and, when I quitted the place he had granted me, I preserved his friendship, and had even the happiness of being useful to him more than once with his sister, who reproached him with being harsh in the negative answers he gave to the petitions that were addressed to him. "It was myself, madam," said I to her, "who drew up those answers;" and I shewed them to her.

"But to these people," added I, "refusal seems bitter, however delicate it be seasoned."—"And why so many refusals?" said she; "have I not enemies enough already? why make me more?"—"Madam," replied I, "it is the misfortune of his post; but it is his duty: there is no medium; he must either dishonour himself, by betraying the interests of the king, to please the people of the court, or he must refuse to incur the ridiculous expenses that he

si solicited to make on all sides.”—“How did others do?” continued this weak woman.—“They did wrong, if they did not act like him. But observe, madam, that less was required of them; for abuses increase as they proceed, and perhaps they expect from him a more timid compliance. But I, who know his principles, dare assure you that he would quit his office rather than swerve from his duty.”—“You are an honest man,” said she to me; “and I am grateful to you for having so well defended him.”

I have scarcely experienced a happier time in my life than the five years I passed at Versailles: for Versailles was to me divided into two regions. One was that of intrigue, ambition, envy, and all the passions that servile interest and necessitous luxury engender: I scarcely ever went there. The other was the abode of labour, of silence, of repose; after labour, joy in the bosom of repose; and it was there I passed my life. Free from inquietude, almost wholly to myself, having little more than two days in the week to give to the light employment of my place, I had created myself an occupation that was as pleasing as interesting: it was a course of study, in which methodically, with my pen in my hand, I surveyed the principal branches of ancient and modern literature, comparing them with each other, without partiality, without respect, like an independent man, who should be of no country and of no age. It was in this spirit that, collecting from my reading the traits that struck me, and the reflections that examples suggested to me, I formed that mass of materials that I first employed in my labours for the *Encyclopedia*, from which I afterwards drew my art of French poetry, and which I have since united in my elements of literature. In this employment there was no restraint; no anxiety about the opinion and judgment of the vulgar. I studied for myself: I noted down my thoughts and sentiments like an independant man: and this course of reading and meditation had the more charms for me, as I thought I discovered between the objects of the art and its means, between its progress and that of nature, relations that might serve to fix the rules of taste. I had few books of my own, but I was abundantly furnished from the royal library. I used to make a good provision of them for the journeys of the court; for in these journeys I went in the suite of M. de Marigny: and the woods of Marly, the forests of Compiègne and Fontainebleau, were the secret shades in which I studied. I had not the same comfort at Versailles; and the only inconvenience I felt there was the want of walks. It is scarcely credible that those magnificent gardens could not be frequented in the summer season; in very hot weather, particularly, the immense sheets of water, the beautiful canal, the marble basons, surrounded by statues, where the bronze seemed to breathe, exhaled, at a distance, pestilential vapours; and the waters of Marly were conducted, at an immense expense, to stand in the valley, and empoison the air we respired. I was obliged to seek a purer and more healthful air in the woods of Verrières or of Satory.

Yet, these excursions of the court were to me sufficiently varied: at Marly, at Compiègne, I was solitary and temperate. I once

indulged the whim of living for six weeks on milk at Compiègne, when in full health. Never was my soul more calm, more peaceful, than during this regimen. My days flowed along in study, with an unalterable equality; my nights were but one gentle sleep; and, after waking in the morning to drink an ample bowl of milk from my black cow, I again closed my eyes to slumber another hour. Discord might have overturned the world; it would not have shaken me. At Marly, I had but one single amusement: it was to be a bystander at the royal card table in the drawing room. There I used to look round the lansquenet table, and observe the torment of the passions concentrated by respect; the greedy thirst of gold, hope, fear, the pain of losing, the ardour of winning, the joy that followed a full hand, the despair that accompanied baffled expectation, rapidly succeeded each other in the souls of the players, under the stern mask of cold tranquillity.

My life was less solitary and less prudent at Fontainebleau. The suppers of *Les Menus-Plaisirs*, the king's hunt, and the theatre, led me to frequent dissipations: and I confess I had not the courage to avoid them.

At Versailles too I had my amusements; but they were so regulated by my plan of study and employment as never to be more than recreation to me. My daily society was that of the first clerks in the public offices, almost all engaging men, and emulous of giving the best dinners in the world. In the interval of their labours they indulged in the pleasures of the table; they were epicures nearly for the same reason for which priests are so. The abbé of the city, for instance, was the most careful man in the world to insure to himself good wine. His house steward used to go every year to collect the unpressed wine of the best cellars in Burgundy, and on his return he always kept within sight of the casks. I used to be of those dinners, and I figured tolerably well at them.

The head clerk in the war office, Dubois, was he who had the frankest friendship for me; we were so familiar together that *thee* and *thou* were our common terms. There is no service he would not have rendered me in his place, had I offered him an opportunity of doing it. But for myself, personally, I only thought of joy and diversion; and if I derived any advantage from the society of the head clerks, it was their own free will that dictated it, unsolicited by me. I will give you an example of it.

Of these laborious sybarites, the most lively, the most seducing, the most voluptuous, with the frailest health, was that Cromot who has since been so brilliant under so many ministers. The facility, the clearness, the celerity with which he transacted the business of his office, and above all his dexterity, captivated them in spite of themselves.

When I first knew him, he was the intimate and favourite secretary of M. de Machault. It was an acquaintance that many people would have envied me, but its only value for me was the pleasure it gave me. About the same time fortune, who was watching over me without my knowledge, introduced me at Versailles to the tender favorite of Bouret, the farmer-general; who was charged

with the distribution of places, an acquaintance not less useful. This woman, who soon became my friend, and who continued so till her last breath, was the witty, the engaging Madame Filleul. She was detained to supper at Versailles, and I was invited to sup with her; I excused myself, saying that I was obliged to go to Paris. She immediately offered to take me thêre, and I accepted a place in her carriage. Our acquaintance then began; she spoke of me to her friend Bouret, and probably inspired him with some desire of knowing me. Thus circumstances disposed themselves for me most favourably, to the dearest object of my vows.

My eldest sister was at an age to be married; and, though I had but a very little portion to give her, several suitable offers had been made her in my native town. I preferred him who in morals and talents I knew to be the best; and my choice happened to be the same my sister would have made, had she simply followed her own inclination. Odde, my old schoolfellow, ever since he left school, had been a model of piety, prudence, and application. His character was gentle and gay, full of candour, and of a perfect equality: incorruptible in his manners and always like himself. He is still living; he is about my age, and I believe there is not a purer soul on earth. There has been neither change nor passage for him, but from the age of innocence to the age of virtue. His father, when he died, left him but little property, but he inherited a rare and precious friend. This friend, in whose praise M. Turgot has often spoken to me, was one M. de Malesaigne, a true philosopher; who, in our isolated town, almost solitary, passed his life in reading Tacitus, Plutarch, Montagne, and in taking care of his domains, and cultivating his gardens. "Who would believe," said M. Turgot to me, "that such a man should be concealed in a small town in Lijnosin? In matters of government I have never seen any one wiser nor better informed." It was this worthy friend of M. Odde who solicited of me in his name the hand of my sister: I was flattered by it; but I thought I could perceive from his letter that Odde indulged the hope of obtaining some place through my interest. I answered that I would do for him all that I possibly could, but that, as my credit was not what it was supposed to be in my province, I was sure of nothing myself, and could promise nothing. M. de Malesaigne replied, that my good faith was better than light promises, and the marriage was concluded.

It was a month afterward that Bouret, being come to consult with the minister of finance about filling the vacant places, I dined with him at his friend Cromot's. It would have been difficult to have brought together two men of more lively native wit, more ready, more fertile in ingenious traits, than these two men. However, in Cromot there was evidently more ease, more habitual grace and facility: in Bouret, more ardour in the desire of pleasing, and more happiness in the pertinence of his wit. This dinner was animated by the gaiety of both, and I insensibly assumed the tone that their gaiety inspired. But, as we rose from table, Bouret displayed a long list of candidates for the vacant offices, and of solicitors for them. These solicitors were all people of rank. It was this duke, that marquis, the princes of the blood, the royal family,

in short, the town and the court. "How mad then have I been," exclaimed I, "who, on marrying my sister to a young man well informed, versed in business, full of talents and good sense, and what's more, an honest man, have given him, as her dowry, the hope of obtaining a place by my feeble interest! I'll write to him instantly, and tell him to flatter himself with no such hope."—"Why so," said Bouret to me, "why do your sister so ill a turn as to afflict her husband? Love, when sad, is very cold; leave them hope, 'tis a happiness, till they get something better."

They left me to go and transact business with the minister, and, after I retired home, a boy from the office came to me on their part to inquire the name of my brother-in-law. He had a place given him the same evening. I need not tell you what was the transport of my joy and my gratitude on the following day. It was the epoch of a long friendship between Bouret and myself. I shall speak of it more at leisure.

The place that was granted to M. Odde, appeared to me too easy and too obscure for a man of his talents. I changed it for one more difficult and of less value, in order that, by making himself known, he might contribute to his own advancement. The place of his destination was Saumer; on their way thither, he and his wife came to see me at Paris; and I cannot express the joy with which my sister was penetrated on embracing me. They stayed some days with me. I was very sensible to the reception my friends so kindly gave them. At the dinners they gave us, it was a touching sight to behold the eyes of my sister continually fixed on me, unable to satiate themselves with the pleasure of seeing me. Hers was not fraternal, it was filial love.

She was scarcely arrived at Saumer, when she formed a tender friendship with a relation of Madame de Pompadour, whose husband had, in that town, a place of two hundred and fifty pounds a year. It was an employment in the salt office. This young man, whose name was De Blois, was attacked with the disorder of which my father, my mother, and my brother had died. We knew too well that it was incurable, and Madame de Blois did not conceal from my sister that her husband had but a short time to live. "It would at least be some consolation to me, my dear friend," said she to her, "if M. Odde could succeed him in the place he holds. Madame de Pompadour will dispose of it; persuade your brother to ask it of her for you." My sister gave me this intimation; I profited of it; the place was promised me. But at the death of M. de Blois, Madame de Pompadour's steward announced to me, that she had just granted this same place, as a dowry, to a young lady whom she protected. Thunderstruck at this intelligence, I went to her house; and, as she passed to go to mass, I asked her with a respectful assurance for the place she had promised me for my sister's husband. "I had forgotten you," said she to me, as she ran along, "and have given it to another; but I'll make you amends." I waited her return, and begged a moment's audience. She permitted me to follow her.

"Madame," said I to her, "it is neither place nor money that I conjure you to save me; for, by depriving me of it, you would give

me a death blow." This preface astonished her, and I continued: "As sure of the place you had promised me as if I had obtained it, I have announced it to my brother-in-law. He has said publicly at Saumer that I had your word for it; he has written to his family and to mine; two provinces are informed of it; I myself, in speaking of your beneficence, have boasted of it at Versailles and at Paris. No one, Madam, will be persuaded that you would have accorded to another the place you had formally promised to me. All the world knows that you have a thousand ways of benefiting whom you please. It is I, then, whom they will accuse of vain boasting, of violated faith, of falsehood; and thus you will see me dishonoured. Madam, I have conquered adversity, I have lived in indigence, but I cannot live in the shame and contempt of honest men. You are pleased to express your desire of indemnifying my brother-in-law; but after I shall have passed for an impudent liar, will you, Madam, restore to me the reputation of an honest man, the only one of which I am jealous? Will your benefices efface the stain my fame will have received? Indemnify, Madam, the other persons you patronise, for the place you promised them in a moment of forgetfulness. It will be very easy for you to procure them one much more advantageous. Do not do me an irreparable injury, that would reduce me to the deepest despair." She wanted to persuade me to wait, telling me that my sister should lose nothing by it. But I persisted in replying, "that it was the place at Saumer that I had boasted of having, and that I would accept no other, were it ten times its value." At these words I withdrew, and the place was granted me.

I had, as you perceive, and as you will soon perceive yet more clearly, facilities for making my own fortune, that might well have excited my ambition; but having provided for the well-being of my family, I was so contented, so tranquil, that I desired nothing more.

My most intimate and most habitual society, at Versailles, was that of Madame de Chalut; an excellent woman, of no brilliant understanding, but great good sense, and of a gentleness, an equality, a truth of character that was inestimable. After having been the favorite *femme-de-chambre* of the first dauphiness, she had passed to the second, and she was still more beloved by her. That princess had no friend more faithful, more tender, more sincere; or, to say better, she was the only true friend the dauphiness had in France. The latter was sensible of it; and her heart was always open to her, even to the most secret of her thoughts; and in the most delicate and most difficult circumstances, she had only her for counsel, for consolation, for support. These sentiments of esteem, of confidence, and of friendship, were communicated from the heart of the dauphiness to that of the dauphin. To marry Mademoiselle Varanchau (that was her maiden name), and to give her a rich dowry, they were both determined to sell their most precious jewels, if the controller-general had not prevented them, by obtaining from the king the charge of farmer-general for the man she should marry. This proves sufficiently what her credit was with the princess, and I may add that there was



nothing she would not have done for me; I have been her friend twenty years, and asked her for nothing. I had formed to myself so noble, so pure an idea of friendship, it was a sentiment so generous in my soul, that I should have thought it profaned and degraded, had I mixed with it any view of ambition; and, the more prodigal Madame de Chalut would have been to me of her good offices, the more I thought it worthy of me to be discreet and disinterested with her.

I seized every occasion of paying my court to those who patronised her, but solely out of complaisance to her; and, if I sometimes wrote verses for them, it was never but when she inspired them. This brings to my memory a scene that was somewhat curious.

Madame de Chalut, after her marriage, still continued in the service of the dauphiness. She was even more assiduous in her attention to her. The princess was so fond of her, that she was afflicted when she was absent. She therefore constantly kept a house at Versailles, and, whenever I went thither, before I was established there, her house was mine. The recovery of the dauphin, from the small-pox, was celebrated there by a fête, and I was invited to it. I found Madame de Chalut beaming with joy, and ravished with admiration at the conduct of her mistress, who day and night, by the pillow of her husband, had rendered him the tenderest care during his malady. The animated recital she made if it moved me. I wrote some verses on this touching subject, the interest of the picture insured the success of the painter; and these verses had at court, at least, the favour of the moment, and the merit of being opportune. On reading them, the prince and princess were affected even to tears. Madame de Chalut was commissioned to tell me how much this reading had penetrated them, and that they should be very happy to see me, to express it to me themselves. "Be in their dining-room to-morrow at dinner time," said she to me; "you will be satisfied with the reception they intend to give you." I did not fail: There was very little company. I was placed opposite to them, at two paces from the table, quite isolated, and full in evidence. On seeing me, they whispered to each other; then raised their eyes to me, and then whispered again. I saw they were occupied concerning me, but they both seemed alternately to let what they wished to say to me expire on their lips. Thus passed their dinner, till the moment when I was obliged to retire with the rest of the company. Madame de Chalut had waited on them at table, and you may judge what impatience this long mute scene caused her. I was to dine with her, and we were to rejoice together at the reception they had given me. I went and waited for her, and when she arrived, "Well! Madam," said I, "ought I not to be extremely flattered at all the obliging, engaging things, that were said to me?" "Do you know," answered she, "how their dinner passed? In trying to engage each other to speak to you; but they had neither of them the courage to do it."—"I did not think myself so imposing a personage as I am, and certainly I ought to be proud of the respect with which I inspired the prince and princess." This con-

trast of ideas appeared to us so comical, that we laughed at it heartily; and I took for granted all that they had the courteous intention to say.

The kind of benevolent feeling with which I was regarded, in this court, was however of service to me in one particular instance; I was listened to, and believed, in an affair that interested me. The register, in which the baptism of *Aurore*, the daughter of *Mademoiselle Verrière* was recorded, attested that she was the daughter of *Mareschal Saxe*; and, after the death of her father, it was the intention of the dauphiness to provide for her education; this was the mother's ambition. But the dauphin took it into his head to say that she was my daughter; and this word made its impression. *Madame de Chalut* told it me jocularly; but I put a very serious construction on this pleasantry of the prince. I accused him of levity; and, offering to prove that I had only known *Mademoiselle Verrière* during the *mareschal's* journey into Prussia, and above a year after the birth of this child, I alleged it would be inhumanly depriving her of her real father, to make her pass for my daughter. *Madame de Chalut* undertook to plead this cause to the dauphiness; and the dauphin yielded. Thus *Aurore* was educated at their expense in a convent of nuns at *Saint-Cloud*; and *Madame Chalut*, who had a country-house at that village, had the kindness, on my account, and at my request, to take charge of the cares and details of her education.

I have still some acquaintances to mention, that I had at *Versailles*: one, of simple convenience, was *Quesnai*, *Madame de Pompadour's* physician; the other, *Madame de Marchais*, and her intimate friend the Count d'Angiviller, a young man of noble character. Between me and the latter an union of sentiment existed, for the forty years it continued, which I may cite as an example of a friendship that neither years nor events have changed nor weakened. *Quesnai* was very incommodiously lodged in *Madame de Pompadour's entresol*, and was entirely engaged, from morning till night, with political and rural economy. He thought he had reduced his system to calculations and axioms, the evidence of which was irresistible; and, as he was forming a school, he was pleased to give himself the trouble of explaining his new doctrine to me, in order to make me a disciple and a proselyte. I, who thought of making him my mediator with *Madame de Pompadour*, applied my whole powers of mind to understand the truths which he thought so evident, but in which I could only discover vagueness and obscurity. To pretend to comprehend what I really did not, was above my powers. But I listened with a patient docility; and left him the hope of finally enlightening me, and of instilling his doctrine. This would have been enough to gain me his good will. I did more. I applauded a labour that I really found estimable; for it tended to preserve a taste for agriculture, in a country where it was too much despised, and to turn a variety of valuable minds to this study. I had even an opportunity of flattering him in this sensible part, which he afforded me.

An Irishman, whose name was *Patulo*, had written a book, in which he developed the advantages of English agriculture over

ours; and, through Quesnai, he had obtained the permission of dedicating it to Madame de Pompadour; but he had written the dedication ill. Madame de Pompadour, after having read it, told him, to apply to me, and to beg me, on her part, to retouch it with care. I found it easier to write another; and, in speaking of husbandmen, I attached to their condition so tender an interest, that madame de Pompadour had tears in her eyes, as she read this dedication. Quesnai perceived it; and I cannot express to you how delighted he was with me. His way of serving me, with the marchioness, was to say here and there a word that seemed to escape him, and which had its effect. With respect to his character, I will mention but one trait, that will sufficiently mark it. He had been placed near the court by the old duke de Villeroy, and the countess d'Estrade, the friend and devoted companion of Madame d'Estioles, who, not suspecting that she was warming a serpent in her bosom, had extricated her from poverty, and brought her to court. Quesnai was therefore attached to Madame d'Estrade by gratitude, when this intriguing woman forsook her benefactress, to abandon herself to the Count d'Argenson, and to conspire against her with him.

It is difficult to conceive how so frightful a woman, in every sense, could, in spite of the deformity of her soul and her face, seduce a man of the character, the talents, and the age of M. d'Argenson. But she had in his eyes the merit of sacrificing to him the friend to whom she owed all, and of being, for love of him, the most ungrateful of human beings.

At the same time Quesnai, without being agitated by these hostile passions, was, on one side, the incorruptible servant of Madame de Pompadour, and, on the other, faithful by gratitude to Madame d'Estrade, who answered for him to M. d'Argenson; and, though he used to go and see them sometimes openly, Madame de Pompadour was not uneasy at it. On their part, they had as much confidence in him as if he had been held by no tie to Madame de Pompadour.

After the exile of M. d'Argenson, by Dubois, who had been his secretary, I received the following information. It is he himself who is going to speak; his recital is present to me, and you may think you hear him. "To supplant Madame de Pompadour," said he to me, "M. d'Argenson and Madame d'Estrade had contrived to inspire the king with a desire of obtaining the favours of the young and beautiful Madame de Choiseul, wife of the minion. The intrigue had made a rapid progress: it was at its *dénouement*. The rendezvous was given; the lady, in all her youth and beauty, was gone to it; she was there at the very moment when M. d'Argenson, Madame d'Estrade, Quesnai and I were together in the minister's closet. We two were mute witnesses; but M. d'Argenson and Madame d'Estrade were exceedingly occupied, exceedingly anxious about what was going on. After some considerable time of eager expectation, arrived Madame de Choiseul, dishevelled and in the greatest disorder, the marks of her triumph. Madame d'Estrade ran to meet her with open arms, and inquired whether her victory were complete. 'Oh! yes,' answer she, 'it is com-

plete ; I am beloved ; he is happy ; she's to be discarded ; he has given me his word for it.' At these words there was a great burst of joy in the closet. Quesnai alone sat unmoved. ' Doctor,' said M. d'Argenson to him, ' there will be no change for you ; and we sincerely hope that you will remain with us.'— ' I count,' answered Quesnai coldly, as he rose, ' I have been attached to Madame de Pompadour in her prosperity, I shall be so still in her misfortune ;' and he instantly went away. We remained petrified ; but no one conceived any mistrust of him. ' I know him,' said Madame d'Es-trade, ' he is not a man that will betray us.' And, indeed, it was not through him that the secret was discovered, and that the Marchioness de Pompadour was delivered of her rival." This was the story of Dubois.

While storms were formed and dissipated beneath Quesnai's *entresol*, he was sketching his axioms and his calculations on rustic economy, as tranquil, as indifferent to these passions of the court, as if he had been a hundred leagues from them. While they deliberated below on peace, on war, on the choice of generals, on the removal of ministers, we, in his little apartment, were reasoning on agriculture, calculating the neat produce, or perhaps dining gaily with Diderot, d'Alembert, Duclos, Helvétius, Turgot, or Buffon ; and Madame de Pompadour, who could not engage this troop of philosophers to descend into her saloon, would come herself to see them at table, and converse with them.

The other connection I mentioned was infinitely dearer to me. Madame de Marchais was not only, in my opinion, the most witty and the most engaging of women, but the best and most essential of friends, the most active, the most constant, the most ardently occupied with all that interested me. Imagine to yourselves all the charms of character, of wit, of eloquence, united in their highest degree, and even those of the face, though she was not beautiful ; above all, in her manners, a most attractive grace : such was this young fairy. Her mind, active beyond all expression, gave to the traits of her countenance a dazzling and enchanting nobility. Not one of her features was that which the pencil would have chosen, but altogether they had a charm that the pencil could not have expressed. Her short and slender form was inimitably turned, and her carriage communicated to her whole person a character of imposing dignity. Add to this an exquisite cultivation, varied, extensive, from the lightest and most brilliant literature to the highest conceptions of genius ; a clearness in his ideas, an acuteness, an accuracy, a rapidity that astonished ; a facility, a choice of language that was always happy, flowing from an abundant source, and as quick as thought : an excellent heart, of inexhaustible kindness, of an obligingness that, invariably the same, was never wearied of exertion, and that had always so easy, so seducing, so flattering an air, that one would have been tempted to suspect there was some artifice in it, if art could ever have given itself that continued unalterable equality which was always the distinctive mark of nature, and the only one of its characters that art could never imitate.

Her society was composed of the most engaging people of the

court, and of those men of letters who were most estimable for their morals, or most distinguished for their talents. With courtiers, she was a model of the most noble and most delicate politeness; the young women came to her house to study her air and her tone. With men of letters, she was on a par with the most witty, and on a level with the best informed. No one conversed with more ease, more precision, nor more method. Her silence was animated by the fire of an acute attentive look; she divined the idea, and her replies were darts that never missed their aim. But the wonder of her conversation was its variety, the feeling of propriety, pertinence, measure; the word best suited to the thing, the moment, and the person; the differences, the finest shades of expression, and what could best be said to all and to each in particular: such was the manner in which this incomparable woman knew how to animate, to embellish, and, as it were, to enchant her house.

Well skilled in music, with a taste for singing, and a sweet voice, she had adorned the little private theatre of Madame de Pompadour; and, when that amusement ceased, she remained as her friend: she was more careful than myself to cultivate her kindness for me, and never missed an opportunity of engaging her to serve me.

Her young friend, M. d'Angiviller, was the more interesting, because, with all that can render man amiable, with all that can render man happy, a beautiful face, a cultivated understanding, a taste for letters and the arts, a noble mind, a pure heart, the king's esteem, the confidence and intimate favour of the dauphin, and with a fame and consideration at court rarely acquired at his age, he never ceased to be, or at least to appear, unhappy at heart. Inseparable from Madame de Marchais, but sad, speechless in her presence, the more serious as she was the more gay, timid and trembling at her voice, he, whose character had such boldness, such force, and such energy, troubled when she spoke to him, looking at her with an embarrassed air, answering her in a feeble, hesitating, and half-extinguished voice, and on the contrary, in her absence, displaying his beautiful physiognomy, conversing well and with warmth, and abandoning himself, with all the liberality of mind and soul, to the gay enjoyment of society; in nothing resembling the situation of a lover treated with rigour, and imperiously governed. Yet they passed their lives together in the most intimate union; and he was, very evidently, the man to whom no other was preferred. If this character of the unhappy lover had lasted but a little while, we should have thought it feigned; but it has been the same for more than fifteen successive years; it has continued since the death of M. de Marchais as it was, while he was living, and till the moment when M. d'Angiviller made her his wife. The scene was then completely changed; the whole authority was transferred to the husband; and the wife became all deference and complaisance, with the submissive air of respect. I have never in my life seen any thing so singular, in moral conduct, as this voluntary and sudden mutation that has since been an equally happy destiny for both.

Their sentiments for me were always in perfect harmony; they are still the same. Those I feel for them will never change.

Among my recreations, I have not reckoned the theatre; though I had always every facility of enjoying it, I went rarely to it; and I only mention it here to mark the epoch of an interesting revolution in the art of declamation.

I had long been in the habit of disputing with Mademoiselle Clairon, on the manner of declaiming tragic verses. I found, in her playing, too much violence and impetuosity, not enough suppleness and variety, and, above all, a force that, as it was not qualified, was more a-kin to rant than to sensibility. It was this that I endeavoured discreetly to make her understand. "You have," I used to say to her, "all the means of excelling in your art; and, great as you are, it would be easy for you still to rise above yourself, by managing more carefully the powers of which you are so prodigal. You oppose to my reasons your brilliant successes, and those you have procured me; you oppose to me the opinions and the suffrages of your friends; you oppose to me the authority of M. de Voltaire, who himself recites his verses with emphasis, and who pretends that tragic verses require, in declamation, the same pomp as in the style; and I can only answer I have an irresistible feeling, which tells me that declamation, like style, may be noble, majestic and tragic, with simplicity; that expression, to be lively and profoundly penetrating, requires gradations, shades, unforeseen and sudden traits, which it cannot have when it is stretched and forced." She used to reply, sometimes with impatience, that I should never let her rest, till she had assumed a familiar and comic tone in tragedy. "Ah! no, Mademoiselle," said I, "that you will never have; nature has forbidden it; you even have it not while you are speaking to me; the sound of your voice, the turn of your countenance, your pronunciation, your gestures, your attitudes, are naturally noble. Dare only to confide in this charming native talent, and I will answer for it you will be the more tragic."

Other counsels than mine prevailed, and, wearied of being importunate without effect, I had yielded; when I saw the actress suddenly and voluntarily come over to my opinion. She came to play *Roxane* at the little theatre at Versailles. I went to visit her at her toilette; and, for the first time, I found her dressed in the habit of a sultana, without hoop, her arms half-naked, and in the true manner of Oriental costume: I congratulated her. "You will presently be delighted with me," said she. "I have just been on a journey to Bourdeaux; I found there but a very small theatre; to which I was obliged to accommodate myself. The thought struck me of reducing my action to it, and of making trial of that simple declamation you have so often required of me. It had the greatest success there: I am going to try it again here, on this little theatre. Go and witness it. If it succeed as well as at Bourdeaux, farewell to my old declamation."

The event surpassed her expectation and mine. It was no longer the actress; it was *Roxane* herself, whom the audience thought they saw and heard. The astonishment, the illusion, the enchant-

ment, was extreme. The audience had never heard any thing like it. I saw her after the play; I was determined to talk to her of the success she had just had. "Alas!" said she, "don't you see that it ruins me? In all my characters, the costume must now be observed; the truth of declamation requires that of dress; all my rich stage-wardrobe is from this moment useless; I lose twelve hundred guineas worth of dresses; but the sacrifice is made. You shall see me here, within a week, playing *Electre* to the life, as I have just played *Roxana*."

It was the *Electre* of Crébillon. Instead of the ridiculous hoop, and the ample mourning robe, in which we had been accustomed to see her in this character, she appeared in the simple habit of a slave, dishevelled, and her arms loaded with long chains. She was admirable in it; and, some time afterward, she was still more sublime in the *Electre* of Voltaire. This part, which Voltaire had made her declaim with a continual and monotonous lamentation, acquired, when spoken naturally, a beauty unknown to himself; for, on seeing her play it at his theatre at Ferney, where she went to visit him, he exclaimed, bathed in tears, and transported with admiration, "*It is not I who wrote it, 'tis herself: she has created her part!*" And indeed, by the infinite shades she introduced, by the expression she gave to the passions with which this character is filled, it was perhaps that of all others in which she was most astonishing.

Paris, as well as Versailles, recognized in these changes the true tragic effect, and the new degree of probability that the strict observance of costume gave to theatrical action. Thus, from that time, all the actors were obliged to abandon their fringed gloves, their voluminous wigs, their feathered hats, and all the fantastic apparel that had so long shocked the sight of all men of taste. Lekain himself followed the example of Mademoiselle Clairon; and, from that moment, their talents, thus perfected, excited mutual emulation, and were worthy rivals of each other.

It may easily be conceived that a mixture of peaceful occupations and varied amusements would have more than indemnified me for the pleasures of Paris. But, to crown the advantages I enjoyed, I had still the liberty of going there when I pleased, to pass the time that was unoccupied by the duties of my place. M. de Marnigny himself, at the solicitation of my old acquaintances, engaged me to go and see them.

I did not cease to remark in his conduct towards me a particularity, to which perhaps another's pride would not have accommodated itself; but a little philosophy made me feel the reason of it. When from home, he, of all men, delighted to live in society with me. At dinner, at supper, at the houses of our common friends, he enjoyed, more than myself, the esteem and friendship that was shewn me: he was flattered by it; he was grateful for it. It was he who introduced me at Madame Geoffrin's; and, from respect to him, I was admitted to the dinners she gave to artists, as well as to those she gave to men of letters: in short, from the moment I ceased to be his secretary, as will be seen in the sequel, no one expressed a more eager desire to have me for his companion and

friend. Yet, as long as I held the place of secretary under him, he never once permitted himself to invite me to dinner. The ministers never dined with their clerks; he had assumed their etiquette, and, had he made an exception in my favour, all the persons employed in his offices would have been jealous and dissatisfied. He never explained himself to me on this subject; but you have just seen that he had the kindness to make it perfectly intelligible to me.

The years I passed at Versailles were those in which the spirit of philosophy was in its greatest activity. D'Alembert and Diderot had hoisted its standard in the immense laboratory of the *Encyclopédie*; and all men of letters, of distinction, were there rallied round them. Voltaire, on his return from Berlin, from which place he had chased the unhappy Arnaud, and where he could not remain himself, had retired to Geneva; and from thence he blew that spirit of liberty, of innovation, and of independence, that has since made such progress. In his spite against the king, he had been guilty of imprudence; but they who obliged him to remain in a land of liberty were guilty of a much greater, when he would fain have returned to his country. The king's answer, *let him remain where he is*, was not sufficiently deliberate. His attacks were not such as could there be prevented. Versailles, where he would have been less bold than in Switzerland or Geneva, was the place of exile they should have given him. The priests should have opened to him that magnificent prison: it was thus that Cardinal de Richelieu acted toward the first nobility.

In reclaiming his title of gentleman in ordinary of his majesty's chamber, he himself held out to them the end of the chain with which they might have fastened him if they would. From Madame de Pompadour herself I learned that he was exiled against her will. She interested herself for him; she sometimes inquired for him of me; and, when I answered that it depended only on her to make her inquiries unnecessary, "Ah! no; it does not depend on me," said she, with a sigh.

From Geneva, therefore, Voltaire animated the co-operators of the *Encyclopédie*. I was of the number; and my greatest pleasure, every time I went to Paris, was to be in their society. D'Alembert and Diderot were satisfied with what I wrote, and our relations strengthened more and more the bonds of that friendship which ended but with life: they were more intimately, more tenderly, more assiduously cultivated by d'Alembert: but not less sincerely, not less unalterably, with the good Diderot, whom I was always delighted to see, and charmed to hear.

I felt at last, I confess, that the distance from Paris to Versailles occasioned unpleasant intervals, which too long and too often delayed the happiness I tasted in the society of men of letters. Those among them, that I loved and honoured most, had the kindness to say we were formed for mutual friendship; and they represented to me the French academy, as a prospect that ought to attract and fix my attention. Thus, from time to time, I felt the desire of engaging again in the career of literature revive. But I first wanted to insure myself an independent and certain



existence ; and that Madame de Pompadour and her brother would have been happy to procure it for me ; the following is a sensible proof :

In 1757, after the outrage committed on the person of the king, and the remarkable change in the ministry, when M. d'Argenson and M. de Machault were removed on the same day, M. Rouillé was appointed postmaster-general, the secretaryship of which was a sinecure worth two hundred and fifty pounds a-year, and was held by old Moncrif. It came into my head to ask for the reversion of it, persuaded that M. de Rouillé, being newly appointed, would not refuse Madame de Pompadour the first thing she should ask. I therefore employed Doctor Quesnai to beg her to grant me an audience. I was put off till the evening of the following day ; and all night long was dreaming of what I should say to her. My brain took fire, and, losing sight of my object, I became wholly occupied with the misfortunes of the state, and resolved to profit by this audience, to tell some useful truths. The greater part of my night was employed in meditating my speech, and my morning in writing it, in order that it might be fully present to my mind. In the evening I went to Quesnai's at the appointed hour, and sent up word that I was there. Quesnai, busy in tracing the zig-zag of the *neat produce*, did not even ask me what I was going to do at Madame de Pompadour's. She sent for me ; and I was introduced to her cabinet : " Madame," said I to her, " M. Rouillé is appointed postmaster-general, the secretaryship depends on him : Moncrif, who holds it, is very old. Would it be abusing your kindness, were I to intreat you to obtain the reversion of it for me ? Nothing can suit me better than this place ; and, for my life, I confine my ambition to it." She answered that she had promised it to Darbouldin (one of her familiars), but that she would make him renounce it, if she could get it for me.

After having returned my thanks, " Madame," said I, " I am going to astonish you ; the favour that I ask of you is not what occupies and interests me most in the present moment : it is the situation of the kingdom ; it is the trouble into which it is plunged, by this never-ending dispute between the parliaments and the clergy ; in which I see the royal authority like a vessel beaten by the storm between two rocks, and a man in the council not capable of governing it." I expatiated on this picture ; and added, that of a war, that called abroad all the land and maritime forces of the state, and that rendered calm and concord, the union of minds and the concurrence of wills so necessary at home. After which, I added, " as long as M. d'Argenson and M. de Machault were in place, to their divisions and misunderstanding might be attributed the intestine dissensions with which the kingdom has been torn, and those acts of rigour which, instead of calming, have but exasperated them. But now that these ministers are removed, and that the men who replace them have neither ascendancy nor influence, recollect, Madame, that it is on you that all eyes are turned, and that it is henceforth to you that all will address their reproaches, and their complaints, if the evil continue, or their public benedictions, if you apply its remedy, and make it cease. In the name of

your glory and your repose, Madame, hasten to produce this happy change. Do not wait till necessity command it, or till some other than you effect it; you will lose the merit of it, and they will accuse you alone of the ill you will not have done. All those who are attached to you have the same fears and form the same vows with me."

She answered she had courage sufficient, and that she wished her friends to have no fears, but to act like her; she added that she was pleased with the zeal I expressed to her; but that I might be very tranquil, as the government was then labouring to pacify all. She promised she would speak to M. Rouillé on that very day, and bade me call again on the following morning.

"I have no good news for you," said she, on seeing me again; "the survivorship of Moncrif's place is disposed of. It was the first thing that the new postmaster-general asked of the king; and he has obtained it in favour of Gaudin, his former secretary. See if there be any thing else that I can do for you."

It was not easy for me to find a place that suited me so exactly as this. Yet, a little time after, I thought myself sure of obtaining one that I liked better, because I should create it, and should leave honourable traces of my labours. This obliges me to introduce a personage that has shone like a meteor, and whose lustre, though very much enfeebled, is not yet extinguished. If I spoke only of myself, all would be soon said; but, as the history of my life is a walk that I am taking with my children, I must shew them the passengers with whom I had relations in society.

The Abbé de Bernis, just escaped from the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, where he had succeeded ill, was a gallant chubby-cheeked poet, fresh coloured, much of a beau; and who, with the *Gentil Bernard*, made pretty verses for the jovial suppers of Paris. Voltaire used to call him the flower-girl of Parnassus, and in society he was more familiarly called *Babet*, from the name of a pretty flower-girl of that time. From this point he started and became a cardinal and an ambassador from France to the court of Rome. He had in vain solicited from the old bishop of Mirepoix (Boyer) a pension on some abbey. This bishop, who set but little value on gallant poetry, and who knew the life that the abbé led, had harshly declared to him that so long as he (Boyer) should continue in place, he had nothing to hope for; to which the abbé had answered, *My lord, I shall wait*; a reply that became current in society, and was considered as peculiarly happy. His fortune therefore consisted of a prebendary at Brionde, which was worth nothing to him on account of his absence, and of a little sinecure at Boulogne-sur-mer, that he had got I know not how.

This was his situation, when he learnt that, at the hunting parties in the forest of Senart, the beautiful Madame d'Estioles had been the object of the king's attention. The abbé immediately solicits the permission to go and pay his court to this young engaging woman, and the Countess d'Estrade, to whom he was known, obtained for him this favour. He arrives at Estioles by the public barge, his little packet under his arm. They engage him to recite some of his verses; he amuses, he exerts every effort to

make himself agreeable; and with that superficiality of wit, and that varnish of poetry, which was his sole talent, he succeeded so well, that, in the absence of the king, he was admitted into the secret of the letters that the two lovers wrote to each other. Nothing could better suit the turn of his mind and of his character, than this species of ministry. And thus, as soon as the new mistress was installed at court, one of the first effects of her favour was, to obtain for him a pension of one hundred pounds on the privy-purse, and apartments at the Tuilleries, which she furnished at her own expense. I saw him in this lodging, under the roof of the palace, the happiest of men, with his pension and his procatelle furniture. As his birth was noble, his protectress advised him to pass from the chapter of Brionde to that of Lyon; and for the latter she obtained, in favour of the new canon, a new decoration. At the same time he was the favourite and declared lover of the beautiful princess de Rohan; which, in the great world, put him on the tone of a man of quality, and he was suddenly named ambassador to Venice. There he received with distinction the nephews of the pope Ganganelli, and by that means procured himself the favour of the court of Rome. Recalled from Venice to assist in the councils of the king, he concluded the treaty of Versailles with Count Staremberg: as a reward, he was appointed minister for foreign affairs, on the resignation of M. Rouillé; and a short time afterward, he obtained a cardinal's hat at the nomination of the court of Vienna.

On his return from his embassy, I saw him, and he treated me as he had done before his prosperity, yet with a tint of dignity that arose from a sense of his high situation; and nothing was more natural. After he had signed the treaty of Versailles, I congratulated him on it; and he told me that I should oblige him by celebrating, in an epistle addressed to the king, the advantages of that great and happy alliance. I answered that it would be more easy, and more grateful to me, to address it to himself. He did not dissemble that he should be flattered by it. I wrote my epistle; he was pleased with it, and his friend, Madame de Pompadour, was enchanted with it; she insisted on its being printed, and presented to the king; which did not at all displease the diplomatic abbé. (I pass over in silence the embassies of Spain and Vienna, to which he was named, but where he did not go, because he had something better to do at Versailles). He soon afterward, on an urgent occasion, wanted a man, sure, discreet and diligent, who wrote a good style; and he did me the honour to have recourse to me. The circumstances were these: the king of Prussia, on entering Saxony with an army of sixty thousand men, had published a manifesto, which the court of Vienna had answered. This answer, translated into a kind of Teutonic French, had been sent to Fontainebleau, where the court then was. It was to be presented to the king on the following Sunday, and the Count de Staremberg had five hundred copies of it to distribute on that day. It was on Wednesday evening that the abbé de Bernis sent to beg me to call on him. He was closeted with the Count de Staremberg. They both expressed to me how much they were afflicted at having to

publish a manifesto written in such bad French; and they told me that I should do something very agreeable to the two courts of Versailles and Vienna, if I would correct it and get it printed with all possible speed, to be presented and published in four days. We read it together, and independently of the Germanisms with which it was filled, I took the liberty of observing to them a number of reasons badly deduced or obscurely presented. They gave me *carte blanche* for all these corrections, and, after having fixed a rendezvous for the next day at the same hour, I commenced my work. At the same time the Abbé de Bernis wrote to M. de Marmigny, to beg him to resign me to him for the rest of the week; as he wanted me for an urgent business that I had kindly undertaken.

I employed almost the whole night, and the following day, in retouching and getting transcribed this ample manifesto; and, at the hour of rendezvous, I carried it to them, in not elegantly, at least more decently written. They praised to excess my performance and my diligence. "But this is not all," said the Abbé to me, "this memoir must be printed and in our hands on Sunday morning, at the hour of the king's levee, and it is by effecting this, my dear Marmontel, that you must crown your work."—"Count," said I to him, "in half an hour I will be ready to set off. Order that a post-chaise may come and fetch me, and write with your own hand a line to the minister of police, in order that the Censor may not retard the impression. I promise you to be here on Sunday as soon as you are up." I kept my word with him; but I arrived worn out with fatigue and care. A few days afterward, he asked me for the note of the expenses of my journey, and of those of the printing. I gave it him very exactly, article by article, and he as exactly paid me the amount. It was never mentioned afterward.

However he did not cease to repeat, on his part, that one of the advantages of the favour he enjoyed, would be the power of being useful to me. For this reason, when he became secretary of state for foreign affairs, I thought that if, in his department, there were any means of employing me usefully to the public, to himself, and to me, I should find him disposed to it. It was on these three bases that I established my project and my hope.

I knew that, at that time, the office for foreign affairs presented a chaos in which the oldest clerks could with great difficulty find their intricate way. Thus, to a new minister, whoever he might be, his place was a long school. In speaking of Bernis himself, I heard Bussy say, (one of these oldest clerks) "This is the eleventh scholar that we have had given us, the abbé of the city and I." And this scholar was the master the dauphin had taken to teach him politics: a very strange choice for a prince who appeared desirous of being solidly instructed!

I should therefore have rendered great service to the minister; the dauphin, the king, and the state itself, if, in this chaos of the past I had established order and thrown light. It was this, that I proposed in a precise and clear memorial, which I presented to the Abbé de Bernis.

My project consisted, first of all, in regulating and arranging the objects of the negotiations according to their different relations, by

their dates with respect to time, by their order with respect to place. Then, from time to time, commencing from an epoch more or less remote, I undertook to extract from all those port folios of dispatches and memorials, whatever was interesting; to form successively an historical table of them, sufficiently developed to pursue by it the course of negotiations; and to observe the spirit of the different courts, the system of their cabinets, the policy of their councils, the character of their ministers, of kings and of their reigns; in a word, the springs that, at such and such periods, had put the great powers of Europe in motion. Three volumes of this course of diplomacy would have been deposited every year in the hands of the minister; and, perhaps, written with care, they might have formed a satisfactory reading to the Dauphin himself. Finally, to render the objects yet more visible, a book of tables would have presented, at one view, all the respective negotiations under their mutual relations, and their simultaneous effects on the courts and cabinets of Europe. For this immense work, I required only two secretaries, a lodging in the office itself, and enough to live frugally at home. The Abbé de Bernis appeared charmed with my project. "Give me this memorial," said he to me, after he had heard it read; "I feel its utility and its excellence more than yourself. I wish to present it to the king." I did not doubt of its success; I waited the answer; I waited in vain; and when, impatient to know the decision of the king, I inquired how it had been received; "Ah!" said he, with a heedless air, as he jumped into his chair to go to the council, "that depends on a general arrangement, on which nothing is yet determined." The arrangement has since taken place: the king has built two hotels, one for the war-office, and the other for foreign affairs. My project has been executed, at least in part, and another has reaped the fruit of it. *Sic vos, non vobis*. After this answer of the Abbé de Bernis, I saw him once again: it was on the day when, in the habit of a cardinal, in a red cap, red stockings, and with a *rocket* trimmed with the richest point lace, he was going to present himself to the king. I traversed his antichambers between two long rows of servants, in new scarlet dresses, laced with gold. On entering his closet, I found him as vain-glorious as a peacock, more chub-cheeked than ever, admiring himself in his glory, and, above all, unable to keep his eyes off his *rocket* and his scarlet stockings. "Don't you think me well dressed?" said he to me. "Exceedingly well," said I; "your new dignity sits admirably on you; and I come, my Lord, to congratulate you"..... "And my livery servants, what do you think of them?" "I took them," answered I, "for the gilded troop who were come to compliment you." These are the last words that passed between us.

I easily consoled myself for his neglect of me, not only because I saw in him nothing but a coxcomb invested with the purple, but because I soon beheld him rude and ungrateful to her who had created him; for nothing weighs so heavily as gratitude when we owe it to the ungrateful.

More happy than he, I found, in study and occupation, consolation for the little frowns I endured from fortune. But as my character was never that of a stoic, I payed less patiently to nature, the tribute of pain she every year imposed on me. Though I habitually had good and full health, I was subject to a head-ache of a very singular species. This disorder is called the *clavus*: its seat is under the eyebrow. It is the beating of an artery, each of whose pulsations is a dart that seems to pierce to the very soul. I cannot express the pain of it; and, lively and profound as it is, one single point only is affected by it. This point is above the eye, the place to which the pulsation of an interior artery corresponds. I explain all this, the better to make you understand an interesting phenomenon.

For seven years, this head-ache returned to me at least once a-year, and lasted twelve or fifteen days, not continually, but by fits, like a fever, and every day at the same hour, with little variation; it continued about six hours, announcing itself by a tension in the neighbouring veins and fibres, and by pulsations not quicker, but stronger, in the artery where the pain was. At its commencement, this pain was almost insensible; and it gradually increased, and diminished in the same way before it left me: but during four hours at least it was in all its force. What appeared astonishing was that, the fit once finished, no trace of pain was left in the part; and that neither the rest of the day, nor the following night, till the next day, at the usual hour, were the least remains of it felt. The physicians, whom I consulted, had in vain attempted to cure me. Bark, bleeding at the nose, emollient liquors, fumigations, sneezing powders, were all without effect. Some of these remedies, the bark for instance, only served to irritate my complaint.

One of the queen's physicians, whose name was Malouin, a very skilful man, but a greater Purgon than Purgon himself, conceived the idea of prescribing for me injections made of the infusions of herbs. These did me no good; but at the end of its accustomed period the disease ceased: and Malouin was proud of so fine a cure. I did not disturb his triumph; but he took this opportunity to give me a gentle reprimand, "Well! my good friend," said he, "will you in future have faith in medicine, and in the knowledge of physicians?" I assured him that my faith was very strong. "No," replied he, "you sometimes suffer yourself to speak of it rather lightly. This does you harm in the world. Among men of letters and science, the most illustrious have always respected our art." To prove this he cited some great names. "Voltaire himself," added he, "who censures so many things, has always spoken with respect of medicine, and of physicians." "Yes, doctor," answered I; "but there was one Molière!" "Aye," said he, looking at me with a fixed eye, and pressing my hand, "and how did he die?"

The seventh year, my complaint again attacked me, when one day, whilst the fit was on me, I saw Genson, the farrier of the dauphin's stables, enter my room. Genson gave some distinguished articles to the *Encyclopédie* on the objects relative to his art.

He had made a particular study of the comparative anatomy between the man and the horse. Not only for the diseases, but also for the nourishment and treatment of horses, no one was better informed than he; but he was little practised in the art of writing, and he had recourse to me to retouch his style. He came with his papers at the moment when, for three hours, I had been suffering torture. "M. Genson," said I, "it is impossible for me to peruse your labours with you to-day: I suffer too cruelly." He saw my right eye inflamed, and all the fibres of the temple and the eyelid palpitating and spasmodic. He asked me the cause of my complaint; I told him what I knew of it; and, after some account of my constitution, my manner of living, and my habitual health: "is it possible," said he, "that the physicians can have suffered you to linger so long under a disease of which it was so easy to cure you?" "What!" answered I with astonishment, "do you know its remedy?" "Yes: nothing is more simple. In three days you shall be cured; and even to-morrow you shall be relieved." "How?" asked I, with a feeble and still timid hope. "When your ink is too thick, and does not run," said he, "what do you do?" "I put water to it." "Well then, put water to your lymph; it will flow, and will no longer choke the glands of the pituitary membrane, which at present confines the artery, whose pulsations bruise the neighbouring nerves, and cause you so much pain." "Is that indeed," asked I, "the cause of my disease?" "Certainly," said he. "In the bone there is a small cavity, called the *frontal sinus*. It is lined with a membrane which is a tissue of ~~these~~ glands. This membrane, in its natural state, is as thin as ~~the~~ ~~skin~~. It is now thick and choked; it wants to be disengaged, and the means are easy and sure. Dine temperately to-day, no *ragouts*, no pure wine, nor coffee, nor *liqueurs*; and, instead of supper this evening, drink as much clear and fresh water as your stomach can properly bear: to-morrow morning drink the same; observe this regimen for a few days, and I predict that to-morrow the pain will decrease, that the day after to-morrow it will be almost insensible, and that the next day it will be nothing." "Ah! M. Genson, you will be my guardian angel," said I, "if your prediction be realized." It was indeed realized. Genson called on me again; and, as I embraced him and announced my recovery, "It is not enough to have cured you," said he; "you must be preserved from a future attack. This part will still be feeble for some years; and, till the membrane shall have resumed its spring and elasticity, it will be there that the thickened lymph will again depose itself. This must be prevented. You have told me that the first symptom of your complaint is a tension in the veins and fibres of the temple and the eyelid. The moment you feel this inconvenience, drink water, and resume your regimen at least for a few days. The remedy of your disorder will be its preventive. Beside, this precaution will only be necessary for a few years. The organ once re-established, I ask nothing more of you." His prescription was exactly observed, and I obtained from it the full success that he had announced.

This year, in which, by the virtue of a few glasses of water, I had relieved myself from so great an evil, was in another respect magical for me, inasmuch as, with a few accidental words, I conferred a great benefit on an honest man, with whom I had no acquaintance.

The court was at Fontainebleau, and there I used often to go and pass an hour, in the evening, with Quesnai. One evening, when I was with him, Madame de Pompadour sent for me and said—"Do you know that La Bruère is dead? He died at Rome. It was he who held the patent of the *Mercur*: this patent was worth a thousand a-year to him; there is enough to make more than one happy man; and we intend to add to the new patent of the *Mercur* a few pensions for men of letters. You, who know them, tell who is in want of such pensions, and would be deserving of them." I named Crébillon, d'Alembert, Boissy, and some others. As for Crébillon, I knew it was unnecessary to recommend him; and for d'Alembert, perceiving she made a little sign of disapprobation—"he is," said I, "madam, a geometrician of the first order, a most distinguished writer, and a perfectly honest man." "Yes," replied she, "but a little hot-headed." I answered, very mildly, that without some warmth in the head, there was no great talent. "He indulges a passion," said she, "for Italian music, and has put himself at the head of the party of the *Buffi*." "It is not the less true," answered I modestly, "that he has written the preface to the *Encyclopédie*." She said no more; but he had no pension. I believe that a graver subject of exclusion was his zeal for the king of Prussia, of whom he was the declared partisan, and whom Madame de Pompadour personally hated. When we came to Boissy, she asked me—"Is not Boissy rich? I thought him at least in easy circumstances: I have seen him at the theatre, and always quite well dressed!" "No, Madam, he is poor, but he conceals his poverty." "He has written so many theatrical pieces," insisted she. "Yes, but all these pieces had not the same success; and he had himself to maintain. In short, Madam, shall I say it? Boissy is so far from rich, that, had not a friend discovered his situation, he would last winter have perished for want. Without bread, too proud to ask it of any one, he had shut himself up with his wife and his son, resolved to die together, and they were about to kill themselves in each other's arms, when this helping friend forced the door and saved them." "Good God!" cried Madame de Pompadour, "you make me shudder. I'll go and recommend him to the king."

The next morning, I saw Boissy enter my room, pale, wild, disordered, with an emotion that resembled joy upon the face of grief. His first impulse was to fall at my feet. I, who thought he fainted, hastened eagerly to aid him, and, raising him up, asked him what could put him in such a state. "Ah! sir," said he, "don't you know?" You, my generous benefactor, you who have saved my life, you who, from an abyss of misery, have raised me to a situation of comfort and unexpected fortune! I came to solicit a moderate pension on the *Mercur*; and M. de Saint-Floren-



tin announced to me that it is the privilege, the patent itself of the *Mercur*e that the king has just granted me. He informed me that I owe it to Madame de Pompadour. In going to return her my thanks, M. Quesnai told me that it was you who, in speaking of me, had so touched Madame de Pompadour, that she had tears in her eyes."

I here endeavoured to interrupt him, by embracing him; but he continued: "What then have I done, sir, to merit from you so kind an interest? I have scarcely seen you; you hardly know me; and, in speaking of me, you have the eloquence of sentiment, the eloquence of friendship!" At these words he would have kissed my hands. "This is too much," said I; "it is time, sir, I should moderate this excess of gratitude; and when your heart shall be comforted, I will explain myself in my turn. I certainly wished to serve you; but in that I have been but just, and without it I should have abused the confidence with which Madame de Pompadour honoured me by consulting me. Her sensibility and her goodness have done the rest. Suffer me to rejoice with you at the smiles of fortune; and let us both return thanks to her to whom you are indebted."

As soon as Boissy had taken leave of me, I went to the minister's; and perceiving that he received me as if he had nothing to say to me, I asked if I had not something to thank him for? He told me no: if the pensions on the *Mercur*e were disposed of? He told me they were: if Madame de Pompadour had not mentioned me? He assured me she had not said a word about me; and that, if she had named me, he would willingly have put me on the list which he had presented to the king. I was confounded, I confess; for, though I had not named myself, when she consulted me, I thought myself very sure of being of the number of those she should propose. I went to her house; and very fortunately I found in her drawing-room Madame de Marchais, to whom I related circumstantially my mischance. "And this really astonishes you?" said she; "for my part I am not at all surprised at it; it is her very self. She has forgotten you." At the same instant she runs to the dressing-room where Madame de Pompadour was; and immediately after I hear bursts of laughter. I thought this a happy presage; and indeed Madame de Pompadour, in her way to mass, could not look on me without laughing again at her palpable forgetfulness. "I divined it exactly," said Madame de Marchais, on seeing me again; "but it shall all be repaired." I obtained a pension of fifty pounds on the *Mercur*e, and I was happy.

M. de Boissy, as the editor, did not sufficiently exert himself. It soon became necessary to support this journal; and for this purpose he had neither the resources nor the activity of the Abbé Raynal, who, in the absence of La Bruère, conducted it, and conducted it well.

Destitute of assistance, finding nothing passable in the papers that were left him, Boissy wrote me a letter, which was a true picture of distress. "You will in vain have given me the *Mercur*e," said he; "this favour will be lost on me, if you do not add

that of coming to my aid. Prose or verse, whatever you please; all will be good from your hand. But hasten to extricate me from the difficulty in which I now am. I conjure you in the name of that friendship which I have vowed to you for the rest of my life."

This letter roused me from my slumber; I beheld this unhappy editor a prey to ridicule, and the *Mercure* decried in his hands, should he let his penury of talent be seen. It put me in a fever for the whole night; and it was in this state of crisis and agitation that I first conceived the idea of writing a tale. After having passed the night without closing my eyes, tossing over in my fancy the subject of what I have entitled, *Alcibiade*, I got up, wrote it at once, without laying down my pen, and sent it off. This tale had an unexpected success. I had required that the name of its author should be kept secret. No one knew to whom to attribute it; and, at Helvétius's dinner, where the finest connoisseurs were, they did me the honour of ascribing it to Voltaire; or to Montesquieu.

Boissy, overjoyed at the increase which this novelty had given to the sale of the *Mercure*, redoubled his prayers to obtain some more pieces of the same kind. I wrote the tale of *Soliman II* for him, then that of *le Scrupule*, and some others. Such was the origin of those moral tales, which have since obtained so much reputation in Europe. In this instance, Boissy did me more benefit than I did him. But he did not long enjoy his good fortune: and, at his death, when it became necessary to appoint his successor: "Sire," said Madame de Pompadour to the king, "will you not give the *Mercure* to him who has supported it?" The patent was granted to me. I was then obliged to resign to quit Versailles. At the same time an employment was offered me, which, at the moment, appeared better and more solid. I know not what instinct, an instinct that has always conducted me tolerably well, prevented me from preferring it.

Marshal Belle-Isle was minister of war; his only son, the Count de Gisors, the best educated and most accomplished young man of the age, had just obtained the lieutenancy and command of the carabiniers, of which the Count de Provence was colonel. The regiment of carabiniers had a secretary attached to the person of the commander, with a salary of five hundred a-year; and this place was vacant. A young man of Versailles, whose name was Dorlif, offered himself to fill it, and said that he was known to me. "Well!" replied the Count de Gisors, "engage M. Marmontel to come and see me; I shall be very happy to speak with him." Dorlif wrote little verses, and used to come sometimes to shew them to me: this was all our acquaintance. As for the rest, I believed him an honest, good man; and that was the testimony I gave of him. "I am going," said the Count de Gisors to me, whom I saw for the first time, "to speak to you in confidence. This young man would not do for this place: I want a man who, from this instant, would be my friend, and on whom I could depend as on myself. The Duke de Nivernois, my father in law, has proposed me one, but I am a little distrustful of the indulgence of the great in their recommendations; and

if you can indicate a man, sure, and such as I ask, not daring," added he, "to pretend to have you yourself, I will take him on your word."

"A month ago, count," answered I, "it would have been for myself that I should have solicited the honour of being attached to you. The patent of the *Mercure de France*, which the king has just granted me, is an engagement that, without levity, I cannot so soon break; but I'll go and see if, among my acquaintance, I can find a man who will suit you."

Among my young friends, there was one at Paris, whose name was Suard, of an active mind, subtle, accurate, and prudent, of an amiable character, a gentle and engaging companion, tolerably well imbued with classical learning, eloquent, writing a pure, easy, natural, and most tasteful style, above all discreet and reserved, with exemplary morals: I fixed my eyes on him. I begged him to call on me at Paris, whither I went in order to save him the journey. On one side, this place appeared to him very advantageous; on the other, he thought it slavish and painful. France was at war; it would be requisite to follow the Count de Gisors in his campaigns; and Suard, naturally indolent, was desirous enough of fortune, but not at the expense of his liberty and repose. He asked twenty-four hours to reflect on it. The next morning he came to tell me that it was impossible for him to accept the place; that M. Delaire, his friend, solicited it; and that he was recommended by the Duke de Nivernois. I knew Delaire to be a man of understanding, a very honest man, of a sure and solid character, and a great severity of morals. "Bring your friend to me," said I to Suard; "I will propose him, and the place will be secure to him." We agreed with Delaire to say simply that my choice happened to coincide with that of the Duke de Nivernois. M. de Gisors was charmed at this coincidence, and Delaire was accepted. "I must go," said the valiant young man to him: "a battle may soon take place, and I am desirous of being at it. You will come and join me as soon as possible." Indeed, a few days after his arrival, the battle of Crevelt was fought, in which, at the head of the carabiniers, he was mortally wounded. Delaire arrived just time enough to bury him.

I asked M. de Marigny if he thought my place of secretary compatible with the patent and management of the *Mercure*. He answered that he thought it impossible to attend to both. "Then give me my discharge," said I; "for I have not the power to discharge myself." He gave it me, and Madame Geoffrin offered me a lodging in her house. I accepted it with gratitude, praying her to have the kindness to permit me to pay the rent of it; a condition to which I made her consent.

Here then I was once more pushed back into that Paris from which I had been so delighted to remove, and more dependent than ever on that public from whom I thought myself disengaged for life. What were become of my resolutions? Two sisters in a convent, of an age to be married; the excessive indulgence of my old aunts in giving credit to all comers, and ruin their trade by contracting debts that I was every year obliged to pay; my future

comfort, to which I was obliged to look forward, having as yet only reserved four hundred guineas, which I had employed in giving security for M. Odde; the French Academy, at which I could only arrive by the career of letters; lastly, the charm of that literary and philosophic society which recalled me to its bosom; were the causes and will be the excuses of that inconstancy, that induced me to renounce repose, so gentle and delicious, in order to go and be the editor of a journal at Paris; that is, to condemn myself to the labour of Sisyphus, or to that of the Danaïdes.

## BOOK VI.

IF the *Mercur*e had been only a simple literary journal, I should have had, in composing it, but one endeavour to fulfil, and but one route to pursue. But, formed of different elements, and calculated to embrace a great variety of objects, it was necessary that, in all its relations, it should fulfil its functions; that, according to the various tastes of the subscribers, it should supply the place of newspapers to the lovers of news; that it should render an account of the theatres to those whom theatres interested; that it should give a just idea of literary productions to those who, select in their reading, wished to be instructed or amused; that to the sane and prudent part of the public, who delight in the progress and discoveries of the useful and salutary arts, it should communicate their attempts at improvement and the happy inventions that succeeded; that to the lovers of the fine arts, it should announce the new productions of art, and sometimes the writings of authors. The popular parts of science that could present objects of curiosity to the public were also a part of its domain. But above all, it was requisite that it should have a local and social interest, for the provincial subscribers, and that the poetic talent of this or that city of the kingdom should there find inserted, from time to time, its enigma, its madrigal, its epistle: this part of the *Mercur*e, in appearance the most frivolous, was the most lucrative.

It would have been difficult to imagine a periodical work more diversified, more attractive, and more abundant in resources. Such was the idea I gave of it in the preface to my first volume, in the month of August 1758. "Its form," said I, "renders it susceptible of all that is useful and agreeable; and genius has neither flowers nor fruits with which the *Mercur*e is not adorned. Literary, civil, and political, it extracts, it collects, it announces, it embraces all the productions of talent and of taste; it is, as it were, the rendezvous of the sciences and the arts, and the channel of their commerce.....It is a field that may become more and more fertile, both by the cares employed in its cultivation and by the riches

that may be spread over it.....It may be considered as an extract, or as a collection: as an extract, it is I whom it concerns; as a collection, its success depends on the aid I shall receive. In the critical part, the worthy man whom I succeed, without daring to pretend to replace him, leaves me an example of precision and prudence, of candour and honesty, which I make my law.....To men of letters I purpose to speak the language of truth, of decorum, and of esteem, and my attention in exalting the beauties of their works will justify the freedom with which I shall observe their defects. No one knows better than I, and I do not blush to avow it, how much a young author is to be pitied, who, when abandoned to insult, has modesty enough to forbid himself personal defence. Such an author, whoever he may be, will find in me, not a passionate avenger, but, according to my abilities, an equitable appreciator. Irony, a parody, or railery, prove nothing, and enlighten no one; they are traits that sometimes amuse; they are even more interesting to vulgar readers than an honest and sensible criticism; the moderate tone of reason has nothing consoling for envy, nothing flattering for malignity; but my design is not to prostitute my pen to the envious and malicious.....With respect to the collective part of the work, although I purpose to contribute to it as much as lies in me, were it only to supply what may be deficient, I do not depend on my own exertions; all my hope is in the benevolence and the aid of men of letters; and I dare trust that hope is founded. If some of the most estimable have not disdained to confide to the *Mercure* the amusements of their leisure, often even the fruits of serious study, at a time when the success of this journal was advantageous to one man only, what assistance ought I not to expect from the concourse of talents interested to support it? The *Mercure* is no longer a private fund; it is a public domain, of which I am but the cultivator and the steward."

Thus was my work announced: and it was well seconded. The moment was favourable. A flight of young poets began to try their wings. I encouraged their first efforts, by publishing the brilliant essays of Malfilatre; I encouraged hopes which he would not have deceived, if a premature death had not torn him from us. The just praises that I gave to the poem of *Fumonville*, revived, in the feeling and virtuous Thomas, that great talent which inhuman critics had frozen. I presented to the public the first offerings of the translation of Virgil's *Georgics*, and I dared to say that, if this divine poem could be translated into elegant and harmonious French verse, it would be done by the Abbé Delille. By inserting in the *Mercure* an *héroïde* of Colardeau, I made the public feel how nearly the style of this young poet approached, by its melody, its purity, its grace, and its dignity, to the perfection of the models of the art. I spoke advantageously of the *héroïdes* of La Harpe. Finally, when the *Hypermnestre* of Lemierre was performed with success, "Behold at present," said I, "three new tragic poets, who inspire the fairest hopes: the author of *Iphigénie en Tauride*, by his sage and simple manner of gradually increasing the interest of the action, and by bursts of poetic fire worthy

of the greatest masters; the author of *Astarlé*, by animated poetry, by a full and harmonious versification, and by the dignity and boldness of a character which wanted nothing to put it in action but contrasts worthy of it; and the author of *Hypermnestre* by pictures of the greatest force. It should be the public care," added I, "to protect them, to encourage them, to console them for the madness of envy. The arts want the torch of criticism, and the spur of glory. It is not to the *Cid* persecuted, it is to the *Cid* triumphant from persecution, that *Cinna* owed its birth. Encouragement inspires neglect and presumption only in little minds; to elevated souls, to lively imaginations, in a word, to great talents, the intoxication of success becomes the intoxication of genius. For them, there is but one poison to fear; it is that which cools them."

Whilst I pleaded the cause of men of letters, I did not fail to mix, with temperate praises, a tolerably severe criticism, but innocent, and in the same tone that a friend would have assumed with his friend. By conciliating the favour of young men of letters with this spirit of benevolence and of equity, I had them almost all for co-operators.

The tribute of the provinces was yet more abundant. It was not all precious; but if, in the pieces of verse or prose that were sent me, there were only some marks of negligence, some incorrectness, some faults in detail, I was careful to retouch them. Sometimes, even if a few good verses or interesting lines occurred to me, I slipped them in without saying a word: and never did the authors complain to me of these little infidelities.

In the sciences, and in the arts, I had likewise a variety of resources. In medicine, at that time, the problem of inoculation was in agitation. The comet predicted by Halley, and announced by Clairault, fixed the eyes of astronomy; natural philosophy afforded me curious observations to publish: for instance, I gave considerable satisfaction, by making public the means of cooling liquors in summer. Chymistry communicated to me a new remedy for the bite of vipers, and the invaluable secret of restoring the drowned to life. Surgery imparted her bold experiments, and her marvellous successes. Natural history, under the pencil of Buffon, afforded me a multitude of pictures, of which I had the choice. Vancanson gave me his ingenious machines to describe, and present to the view of the public: the architect Leroi, and the engraver Cochin, after having travelled, to observe with the eyes of artists, one, the ruins of Greece, and, the other, the wonders of Italy, came, emulous of each other, to enrich me with brilliant descriptions or learned observations; and my extracts from their travels were an amusing journey to my readers. Cochin, a man of understanding, and whose pen was scarcely less pure and correct than his engravings, wrote me some excellent disquisitions on the arts that were the objects of his studies. I recollect two of them, that painters and sculptors have surely not forgotten; one, *on reflected light*; the other, *on the difficulties of painting and sculpture compared with each other*. It was he who dictated the account I gave to the public of the exhibition of pictures in 1759, one of the most beautiful that had ever been seen, or that has since been

seen in the hall of the arts. This account was a model of sound and benevolent criticism; it justly indicated the defects, and it exalted the beauties. The public were not deceived, and the artists were satisfied.

At this time, a new career was opened for eloquence. The French academy invited all young orators to celebrate the praises of great men; and what was my joy in having to announce that, in these lists, the first who had just borne the prize, by a worthy eulogy on Maurice de Saxe, was the interesting youth whose courage I had so often animated, the author of the poem of *Jumonville*, who was not less pleased with the sincerity of my counsels than with the equity of my praises; and who, in the secrecy of most intimate friendship, had made me the confidant of his thoughts, and the censor of his writings!

I had formed a correspondence with all the academies of the kingdom, as well for the arts as for letters; and without reckoning their productions, which they were pleased to send me, the bare subjects for their prizes were interesting to read, on account of the sound and profound views announced by the questions they proposed for solution, whether in morality, in political economy, or in the useful, domestic, and salutary arts. I was sometimes astonished myself at the luminous extent of these questions, that were sent us from every side and from the remotest corners of the provinces. Nothing, in my opinion, better marked the direction, the tendency, the progress of the public mind.

Thus, without ceasing to be amusing and frivolous in its light part, the *Mercur* did not fail to acquire, in utility, consistence and weight. On my part, contributing as well as I could to render it at once agreeable and useful, I often added to it one of those tales, in which I always endeavoured to mix some portion of interesting morality. The apology for the theatre, which I wrote in answer to Rousseau's letter to D'Alembert on the stage, had all the success that truth could have when it combats sophistry, and reason, when it combats, hand to hand, and in close contest, with eloquence.

But as we should never be either so proud or forgetful as to be guilty of ingratitude, I will honestly tell you what was occasionally one of my resources. At Paris the republic of letters was divided into several classes, that had little or no communication with each other. I neglected none of them: and the little verses that were made in inferior societies, all that had grace or nature were dear to me. At a jeweller's, in the *Place Dauphine*, I had often dined with two poets of the old comic-opera, whose genius was gaiety, and whose poetic fire never was so vivid as under the vine-arbour of a tavern. To them, the happiest of all states was intoxication; but, before they were too far gone, they used to have moments of inspiration that seemed to confirm what Horace had said of wine. One of them, whose name was Galet, passed for an idle rake; I never saw him but when at table; and I mention him only as the friend of Panard, who was a good man, and whom I loved.

This idle rake, however, was an original, whose singularity may occupy a moment. He was a grocer in the *Rue des Lom-*

bards, and more attentive to the theatre of *la Foir* than to his shop, had already ruined himself, when I knew him. He was in a dropsy, but he did not drink the less, nor was he the less jovial: he was as indifferent about death as careless of life; and in penury, in captivity, on the bed of sickness, and almost in the agonies of death, his gaiety did not forsake him; to him, these things were sport.

After his bankruptcy, he fled to the *Temple*, then the asylum for insolvent debtors: and, as he every day received bills from his creditors: "Here I am," said he, "lodged in the temple of accounts." When his dropsy was on the point of suffocating him, the vicar of the temple came to administer to him the extreme unction: "Ah! Mr. Abbé," said he to him, "you are coming to grease my boots; you need not have troubled yourself, for I am going by water." The same day he wrote to his friend Collé; and wishing him a happy new year in some couplets to the air of,

*Accompanied by several others,*

he thus terminated his last gaiety:

Praise these couplets, do not vex me,  
I could make you many more,  
More than all the sainted brothers;  
But, dear Collé, at this same hour  
A certain grave digger expects me,  
Accompanied by several others.

The good Panard, as heedless as his friend, as forgetful of the past, and as negligent of the future, had, in his misfortunes, rather the tranquillity of a child than the indifference of a philosopher. The cares of board, lodging, and clothing himself, did not at all concern him. They were the business of his friends; and he had some so kind as to merit this confidence. In his manners, as in his mind, he had a great deal of the simple and unaffected nature of *la Fontaine*. No exterior ever announced less delicacy; yet it was inherent in his fancy and in his language. More than once at table, when rosy with the fumes of wine, I have heard issue from that heavy mass, and that thick covering, *impromptu*, couplets full of ease, of delicacy, and of grace; and when, in compiling the *Mercur*e of the month, I wanted some pretty verses, I used to go and see my friend Panard. "*Rummage among the lumber in my wig-box,*" used he to say to me. It was indeed a true lumber-box, in which the verses of this amiable poet, scrawled on dirty strips of paper, were heaped together in confusion. Seeing almost all his manuscripts spotted with wine, I reproached him with it. "*Oh! take them, take them,*" cried he; "*they have the seal of genius.*" He had so tender an affection for wine, that he always spoke of it as of the friend of his heart; and, with the glass in his hand, looking at the object of his worship and his delight, he would suffer himself to be so moved by it, that the tears would start into his eyes. I have seen him shed them for a very singular reason. The instance I am about to give is no tale; it is the genuine portrait of a drunkard.



After the death of his friend Galet, meeting him in my walks, I wished to express the part I took in his affliction. "Ah! sir," said he, "*my grief is very inexpressible! A friend of thirty years, with whom I passed my life! In my walks, at the theatre, at the wine-shop, always together! I have lost him. I shall sing no more; I shall drink no more with him. He is dead. I am alone in the world. I know not what to do with myself.*" As he complained thus, the good man melted into tears; and so far nothing could be more natural. But observe what followed: "You know," said he, "*that he died at the temple. I went there to weep and lament over his grave. But what a grave! Ah! sir; they have laid him under a water-spout, he who, since he arrived at the age of maturity, never tasted water.*"

You are now going to behold me living at Paris with people of very different characters, and I should have a beautiful gallery of portraits to paint to you, if I had colours lively enough for that purpose. But I will at least attempt to sketch to you their features.

I have said that so long as Madame de Tencin lived, Madame Geoffrin was in the habit of going to see her; and the cunning old woman penetrated so well the motive of her visits, that she used to say to her guests, "*Do you know why la Geoffrin comes here? It is to see what she shall be able to collect from my inventory.*" And indeed, at her death, a part of her company, and the best part of what remained (for Fontenelle and Montesquieu were no longer living) had passed into the new society; but which was not limited to that little colony. Rich enough to make her house the rendezvous of letters and of the arts, and perceiving that it would be the means of affording to her old age an amusing society and an honourable existence, Madame Geoffrin had established at her own house two dinner parties, one, on Mondays, for artists; the other, on Wednesdays, for men of letters; and it is a remarkable thing that, without any tincture either of letters or of the arts, this woman, who, in her life had never learnt any thing but very superficially, did not appear a stranger in either of these societies: she was even at her ease in them; but she had the good sense never to speak but of what she well knew, and to listen, on all other subjects, to the better informed; always politely attentive, without even appearing wearied at what she did not understand; but still more adroit in presiding, in watching over, in holding under her command these two societies, naturally inclined to a freedom that borders on licence; in setting bounds to this freedom, and in bringing it back by a word, or a gesture, as by an invisible thread, when it would fain escape. "*Come, that's well,*" was commonly the signal of prudence that she gave to her guests; and, whatever might be the vivacity of a conversation that passed the limit; at her house, you might say what Virgil has said of bees:

*Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta  
Pulvis exigui jactu compressa quiescent.*

This lady was of a singular character, difficult to describe, as it consisted entirely of demi tints and shades; and, though very decided, it had not one of those distinguishing traits by which disposition is usually marked and defined. She had kindness, but very little sensibility; she was beneficent, but without one single charm of benevolence; eager to aid the unfortunate, but without seeing them, for fear of being moved by them; a sure, faithful, even an officious friend, but timid, disturbed, whilst in the very act of serving her friends, with the fear of compromising either her credit or her repose. She was simple in her tastes, in her dress, in her furniture, but nice in her simplicity, having the delicacies of luxury in all their refinement, but nothing of their brilliancy nor of their vanity. Modest in her air, in her carriage, in her manners, but with a fund of pride and even a little vain glory. Nothing flattered her more than her commerce with the great. At their houses, she saw them but rarely; there she was not at her ease; but she had the secret of attracting them to hers by a coquetry imperceptibly flattering; and in the easy, natural, half-respectful and half-familiar air with which she received them, I thought I saw an extreme address. Always free with them, always on the verge of propriety, it was never overstepped. To be in favour with heaven, without being out of favour with her society, she used to indulge in a kind of clandestine devotion: she used to go to mass as one goes to an intrigue; she had an apartment in a convent of nuns, and a tribune in the church of the Capucins, but with as much mystery as the gallant women of that day had their private houses for intrigue. All kind of state disgusted her. Her greatest care was to make no noise. She was ardently desirous of celebrity, and of acquiring a great consideration in the world; but she would have it tranquil. A little like the lunatic who fancied himself made of glass, she avoided, as so many rocks, all that could expose her to the shock of human passions; and thence her timidity, her faint-heartedness, whenever a good office required courage. The man for whom, with a full heart, she would have freely opened her purse, was not equally sure of the support of her tongue, and on this point she flattered herself with ingenious excuses. For example, it was her maxim that, when we hear our friends abused in company, we should never undertake warmly their defence, nor contend with the defamer; for that was the sure way to irritate the viper, and refine its venom. She used to say that a man should praise his friends but very temperately, and for their qualities, not for their actions; for on hearing it said of some one that he is sincere and beneficent, each can say to himself, I too am beneficent and sincere. "But," said she, "if you cite of him a laudable act, an act of virtue, since each cannot say that he has done as much, he takes this praise for a reproach, and seeks to depress it." What she most esteemed in a friend, was an attentive prudence never to compromise her; and, as an example, she used to cite Bernard, the man of all others most coldly precise in his actions and his words. "With him," used she to say, "one may be tranquil; no one complains of him; it is never necessary to defend him." This

was a hint for heads a little lively like mine, for there were more than one such in her society; and if any one of those she loved happened to be in danger or in trouble, whatever might be the cause, and whether he were right or wrong, her first impulse was to accuse him herself: on which point, perhaps too warmly, I one day took the liberty of telling her that her friends should be all infallible and always happy.

One of her foibles was the desire of intermeddling in the affairs of her friends, of being their confidant, their counsel, and their guide. By initiating her in your secrets, and suffering yourself to be guided, and sometimes scolded by her, you were sure of touching her in her most sensible part. But indocility, however respectful, cooled her instantly; and, by a little dry anger, she shewed how much she was offended. It is true that, to conduct yourself according to the rules of prudence, you could not do better than consult her. The knowledge of life was her supreme science: her notions on all other subjects were trivial and common; but in the study of manners and customs, in the knowledge of men, and, above all, of women, she was profound, and capable of giving good and useful instruction; and, therefore, if a little self-love was mixed with this desire of counselling and guiding, it was likewise accompanied by kindness, by a wish to be useful, and by sincere friendship.

With regard to her mind, although solely cultivated by her commerce with the world, it was delicate, accurate, and penetrating. A natural taste, a right understanding, gave her, when she spoke, the appropriate word and turn of expression. She wrote purely, simply, and in a concise and clear style; but like a woman who had been badly educated, and who liked to shew it. In a charming eulogy that your uncle has written of her, you will read that an Italian abbé being come to offer to her the dedication of an Italian and French grammar—"To me, Sir," said she to him, "the dedication of a grammar! to me who do not even know how to spell!" It was the simple truth. Her peculiar talent was that of telling a story well; she excelled in it, and willingly employed it to enliven the table, but without affectation, without art, without pretension, solely to set the example; for she neglected none of the means she possessed to render her society agreeable.

Of this society, the gayest man, the most animated, the most amusing in his gaiety, was D'Alembert. After having passed his morning in algebraic calculations, and in solving the problems of mechanics or astronomy, he came from his study like a boy just loose from school, seeking only to enjoy himself; and by the lively and pleasant turn that his mind, so luminous, so solid, so profound, then assumed, he soon made us forget the philosopher and the man of science, to admire in him all the qualities that can delight and engage. The source of this natural gaiety was a pure mind, free from passion, contented with itself, and in the daily enjoyment of some new truth that recompensed and crowned his labours; a privilege which the mathematics exclusively possess, and which no other kind of study can so completely obtain.

The serenity of Mairau, and his gentle and engaging temper;

had the same causes and the same principle. Age had done for him what nature had done for D'Alembert. He was temperate in all the emotions of his soul; and what warmth he had left was in the vivacity of Gascon wit, but steady, sage, and correct, of an original turn, sweet and delicate. It is true that the philosopher of Béziers was sometimes disturbed about what was passing in China; but, when any letters from his friend, father Parénnin, arrived, and calmed his inquietude, he was elevated with joy.

Oh! my children! what souls are those that are only agitated about the motion of the ecliptic, or the manners and arts of the Chinese? No vice degrades them, no regret decays them, no passion saddens and torments them; they are free, with that freedom which is the companion of joy, and without which there never was any pure and lasting gaiety.

Marivaux would have been very glad to have had this jovial humour too; but he had a business in his head that incessantly preoccupied him, and gave him a sullen air. As he had acquired by his works the reputation of a subtle and refined wit, he thought himself obliged to give perpetual proofs of it, and he was continually on the watch for ideas susceptible of opposition or analysis, in order to turn or wind them as his fancy dictated. He would agree that such a thing was true *as far as a certain point, or in a certain view*; but there was always some restriction, some distinction to make, which no one perceived but himself. This exertion of the attention was laborious to him, and often painful to others; but it sometimes gave birth to happy perceptions and brilliant flashes of genius. Yet it was easy to discover, by the inquietude of his looks, that he was in pain about the success he already had, or about that he was about to obtain. There never was, I believe, self-love more delicate, more wayward, or more fearful; but, as he carefully humoured that of others, we respected him; and we only pitied him that he could not resolve to be simple and natural.

Chastellux, whose mind never was sufficiently clear, but who had a vast deal of understanding, and in whom very lively glimmerings would pierce from time to time the light vapour that enveloped his ideas, brought into our society the most engaging character, and the most lovely candour. Whether he were mistrustful of the accuracy of his opinions, and sought to assure himself of it, or whether he wished to refine them by discussion, he was fond of debate, and willingly engaged in it, but with grace and good faith; and as soon as his eye caught a glimpse of truth, whether it came from you or from himself, he was happy. No man ever employed his understanding better in enjoying that of others. A witticism, an ingenious story opportunely told, charmed him; you might see him leap for joy at them; and, in proportion as conversation became more brilliant, the eyes and countenance of Chastellux became animated: all success flattered him as if it had been his own.

The Abbé Morellet, with more order and clearness in a very rich magazine of every kind of knowledge, possessed in conversation a source of sound, pure, profound ideas; that, without ever

being exhausted, never overflowed. He shewed himself at our dinners with an open soul, a just and firm mind, and with as much rectitude in his heart as in his understanding. One of his talents, and the most distinguishing, was a turn of pleasantry delicately ironical, of which Swift alone had known the secret before him. With this facility of being severe, if he had been inclined, no man was ever less so; and if he ever permitted himself to indulge in personal raillery, it was but a rod in his hand to chastise insolence or punish malignity.

Saint Lambert, with a delicate politeness, though a little cold, had, in conversation, the same elegant turn, the same acuteness of mind that you remark in his writings. Without being naturally gay, he became animated by the gaiety of others; and on philosophical or literary subjects, no one conversed with sounder reason nor more exquisite taste. This taste was that of the little court of Luneville, where he had lived, and whose tone he preserved.

Helvétius, preoccupied with his ambition of literary celebrity, came to us, his head heated with his morning's work. To write a book that should be distinguished in his age, his first care had been to seek for some new truth to publish, or some bold and new idea to produce and support. But, as new and fruitful truths have been infinitely rare for the last two thousand years, he had taken for his thesis the paradox which he has developed in his work *De l'Esprit*. Whether it were that, by dint of contention, he had persuaded himself of what he wished to persuade others, or whether he were still struggling against his own doubts, and sought to conquer them, we were amused at seeing him bring successively on the carpet the questions that occupied or the difficulties that embarrassed him; and after having afforded him for some time the pleasure of hearing them discussed, we engaged him to suffer himself to be carried along with the current of our conversation. He then gave himself wholly to it, with infinite warmth, as simple, as natural, as ingeniously sincere in his familiar converse as you see him systematic and sophistical in his writings. Nothing less resembles the simplicity of his character and of his habitual life, than the premeditated and factitious singularity of his works; and this want of harmony will always be found between the manners and opinions of those who fatigue themselves with imagining strange things. Helvétius had in his soul the complete contrary of what he has said. There never was a better man: liberal, generous, without ostentation, and beneficent because he was good, he conceived the idea of calumniating all honest men and himself, by giving to all moral actions no motive but self-love. Abstracted from his writings, we loved him such as he really was, and you will soon see what a resource his house was for men of letters.

A man, still more ambitious of glory than he, was Thomas; but, more in tune with himself, he only expected success from the rare talent he possessed of expressing his sentiments and his thoughts; sure of giving to common subjects the originality of a lofty eloquence, and to known truths new development, new extension, and new lustre. It is true that, absorbed in his medita-

tions, and incessantly preoccupied with what might acquire him an ample fame, he neglected the little cares and the light merit of being engaging in society. The gravity of his character was soft, but reserved; silent, smiling with difficulty at the gaiety of conversation, without ever contributing to it. He even scarcely ever spoke freely on subjects that were familiar to him, unless it were in an intimate and confined circle: it was there only that he was brilliant with the light of intellect, and astonishing in copiousness. At our dinners, he added to our number, and it was only by reflection on his literary merit and on his moral qualities, that he enjoyed there any consideration. Thomas always sacrificed to virtue, to truth, to glory, never to the graces; and he has lived in an age when, without the influence and favour of the graces, there was no brilliant reputation in literature.

I cannot mention the graces without speaking of one who had all their gifts, both in mind and in language, and who was the only woman that Madame Geoffrin had admitted to her dinners of men of letters; it was the friend of d'Alembert, Mademoiselle Lespinasse: a wonderful composition of correctness, reason, prudence, with the liveliest fancy, the most ardent soul, the most inflammable imagination that ever existed since the days of Sappho. That fire that circulated in her veins, and which gave to her mind such activity, brilliancy, and so many charms, has prematurely consumed her. I will tell you hereafter what regret her loss occasioned. Here I only mark the place she occupied at our dinners, where her presence excited inexpressible interest. The continued object of attention, whether she listened or whether she spoke herself (and no one spoke better) without coquetry, she inspired us with the innocent desire of pleasing her; without prudery, she made freedom feel how far it might venture, without disturbing modesty or wounding decorum.

It is not my intention to describe the whole circle of our convivial friends. There were some idle ones who scarcely did any thing but enjoy it: men well informed, however, but covetous of their riches, and who, without giving themselves the trouble of sowing, came but to reap. The Abbé Raynal was most certainly not of this number, and in the use he made of the vast fund of knowledge he possessed, if he sometimes indulged in excess, it was not an excess of economy. The robust vigour of his philosophy had not there shewn itself, the great mass of his information was not completely formed; sagacity, accuracy, precision, were then the most distinguishing qualities of his mind, and he added to them a goodness of heart and an amenity of manners that made him dear to us all. It was observed at the same time, that the facility of his elocution, and the abundance of his memory, were not sufficiently tempered. His brilliant flow of expression was rarely susceptible of dialogue; it has only been in his old age that, less vivid and less abundant, he has known the pleasures of conversation.

Whether it had entered into the plan of Madame Geoffrin to attract to her house the most distinguished foreigners who came to Paris, and by that means to render it celebrated throughout

Europe ; or whether it were the consequence and natural effect of the charm and the lustre this house received from the society of men of letters, there arrived neither prince, nor minister, nor men nor women of distinction, who, on going to see Madame Geoffrin, were not ambitious of being invited to our dinners, and who did not feel great pleasure at seeing us assembled at table. It was on those days particularly that Madame Geoffrin displayed all the charms of her understanding, and used to say to us, *let us be agreeable*. And it was rare indeed that these dinners failed to be animated by excellent conversation.

From among the foreigners who came to make Paris their residence, or to stay some time there, she made a selection of the most learned and the most engaging, and they were admitted of the number of her convivial friends. I shall distinguish three of them, who, for the charms of wit and abundant information, were not surpassed by the most cultivated of the French : they were the Abbé Galiani, the Marquis of Caraccioli, since ambassador from Naples, and the Count de Creutz, the Swedish minister.

The Abbé Galiani was in his person the prettiest little harlequin that Italy ever produced ; but on the shoulders of this harlequin was the head of Machiavel. An epicurean in his philosophy, and with a melancholy soul, having looked at every thing on the side of ridicule, there was nothing, either in politics or in morality, on which he had not some good story to tell ; and these stories had always the merit of pertinence, and the wit of an unforeseen and ingenious allusion. Figure to yourself too the prettiest little natural graces, in his manner of relating and in his gesticulation, and you may conceive what pleasure we derived from the contrast between the profound sense of the story and the bantering air of him who told it. I do not at all exaggerate when I say that we forgot every thing in order to hear him, for whole hours together. But, when his part was played, he was like a cipher in the company ; and, sad and mute in a corner, he had the air of impatiently waiting the watchword to re-enter on the stage. It was with his arguments as with his stories ; he would be listened to. If he were sometimes interrupted, he would say, " Let me but finish, and you shall soon have full leisure to answer me." And when, after having described a long circle of inductions (for that was his way) he at last concluded, if any one shewed an inclination to reply to him, you might see him slide in among the crowd, and quietly escape.

Caraccioli, at first sight, had in his physiognomy the dull and heavy air with which you would paint stupidity. To animate his eyes and disengage his features, it was necessary that he should speak. But then, and in proportion as that lively, piercing, and luminous intelligence with which he was gifted, awoke, it sent forth beams of light ; and acuteness, gaiety, originality of thought, simplicity of expression, the grace of an animated smile, and a look of sensibility, all united to give an engaging, intelligent, and interesting character to ugliness. He spoke our language ill, and painfully ; but he was eloquent in his own ; and when the French term did not occur to him, he used to borrow the word, the turn,

the image he wanted, from the Italian. Thus he every moment enriched his language with a thousand bold and picturesque expressions that excited our envy. He accompanied them too with those Neapolitan gestures that, in the Abbé Galiani, so well animated expression; and it was said of both of them, that they had wit even to their fingers' ends. Both too had excellent stories, almost all of which had a delicate, moral, and profound meaning. Caraccioli had studied men as a philosopher; but he had observed them more as a politician and a statesman, than as a satirical moralist. He had contemplated the manners, the customs, and the policy of nations on a large scale; and, if he cited some particular features of them, it was only as examples, and in support of the inferences he drew. In knowledge, his riches were inexhaustible, and he distributed them with the most engaging simplicity; beside, he had in our eyes the merit of being an excellent man. Not one of us would have thought of making a friend of the Abbé Galiani; each of us was ambitious of the friendship of Caraccioli; and I, who have long enjoyed it, cannot express how desirable it was.

But one of the men to whom I have been most dear, and whom I have most tenderly loved, has been the Count de Creutz. He too was of the literary society and dinners at Madame Geoffrin; less eager to please, less occupied with the care of attracting attention, often pensive, still oftener absent, but the most charming of the convivial circle, when without distraction he gave himself freely to us. It was to him that nature had really given sensibility, warmth, the delicacy of moral sentiment and of that of taste; the love of all that is beautiful, and the passion of genius as well as that of virtue: it was to him that she had granted the gift of expressing and painting in touches of fire, all that had struck his imagination or vividly seized on his soul: never was a man born a poet, if this man were not so. Still young, his mind ornamented with a prodigious variety of information, speaking French like ourselves, and almost all the languages of Europe like his own, without reckoning the learned languages, versed in all kinds of ancient and modern literature, talking of chymistry as a chymist, of natural history as a pupil of Linneus, and particularly of Sweden and of Spain as a curious observer of the properties of climates and of their divers productions; he was for us a source of knowledge, embellished with the most brilliant elocation.

This may suffice to make you feel what interest and what a charm this rendezvous of men of letters must have had. For my own part, I kept my corner there, neither too bold, nor too timid; gay, simple, and even somewhat free; well liked in the society, dear to those I most loved and esteemed. With respect to Madame Geoffrin, though I lived in her house, I was not one of the first in her favour; yet she was pleased with me for animating the company in my turn, and pretty often too, either by little stories, or by traits of pleasantry that I accommodated to her taste; but, as to my personal conduct, I had not enough complaisance in consulting her, and in following the advice she gave me: and on her part she had so little confidence in my prudence, that she feared



lest I should occasion her some of those vexations that she sometimes suffered from the imprudence of her friends. With me, therefore, she was on a tone of timid and cautious kindness; and I, reserved with her, endeavoured to be agreeable to her; but I would not suffer myself to be governed.

At the same time she saw me succeeding with her whole society: and at her Monday's dinner I was not less kindly welcomed than at her literary banquet. The artists liked me, because, at once curious and docile, I talked to them incessantly of what they knew better than I. I have forgotten to say that, under my lodgings, at Versailles, was a large room filled with pictures that were taken successively to decorate the palace, and which were almost all from the pencil of the greatest masters. This room was my recreation, my morning's walk; I used to pass hours together there with the good Portail, the worthy guardian of this treasure, in conversing with him on the genius and manner of the different schools of Italy, (and on the distinctive character of the great masters. In the gardens I had formed some comparative ideas of ancient and modern sculpture. These preliminary studies enabled me to reason with our artists, and, by leaving them the advantage and the amusement of instructing me, I had in their eyes the merit of being delighted to listen to them, and to profit by their lessons. With them I took great care to display no other literary knowledge than that which interested the fine arts. I had no difficulty in perceiving that, with good natural understandings, they almost all wanted information and culture. The good Carle-Vanloo possessed, in a high degree, all the talent that a painter could have without genius; but he had no inspiration; and to supply it, he had cultivated but few of those studies that elevate the soul, and fill the imagination with great objects and great ideas. Vernet, admirable in the art of painting water, air, light, and the play of the elements, had all the models of his compositions very vividly present to his fancy; but beyond that, although gay enough, he was but a common man. Soufflot was a man of sense, very circumspect in his conduct, a skilful and learned architect; but his ideas were all inscribed within the circle of his compass. Boucher had some fire in his imagination, but little truth, and still less dignity; the graces he had seen were not of a good family; he painted Venus and the Virgin after the nymphs of the theatre; and his language as well as his pictures, savoured of the manners and tone of his models. Lemoine, the sculptor, tenderly inclined our hearts to friendship by the modest simplicity that accompanied his genius; but even on his art, which he knew so well, he spoke little; and he scarcely answered to the praises that were given him: a pleasing timidity in a man whose look was all mind and all soul. Latour had some enthusiasm, and he employed it in painting the philosophers of that time. But his brain was so disturbed about politics and morality, on which he thought he reasoned most learnedly, that he fancied himself humbled if you talked to him of painting. You have, painted by him, my dear children, a sketch of my portrait: it was a return for the complaisance with which I listened to him, regulating the destinies

of Europe. With the rest, I instructed myself on what concerned their art; and hence these dinners of artists had for me their interest of pleasure and utility.

Among the amateurs who partook of these dinners, there were some well imbued with good studies. With these I had no difficulty in varying the conversation, nor in reviving it when it languished; and they seemed to be well pleased with my manner of conversing with them. One of them alone shewed me no kindness; and, in his cold politeness, I perceived aversion; it was the Count de Caylus.

I cannot say which of the two had anticipated the other; but I had scarcely known his character when I conceived as strong a dislike to him as he ever felt to me. I never gave myself the trouble of examining in what I could have displeased him. But I well knew what displeased me in him. It was the importance he gave himself for the most futile merit, and the most trivial of talents; it was the value he attached to his minute researches, and to his antique gewgaws; it was the kind of sovereignty he had usurped over the artists, and which he abused, by favouring ordinary talents that paid their court to him, and by depressing those that, bolder in their force, did not go to solicit his support. It was, in short, a very adroit and very refined vanity, and a most bitter and imperious pride, under the rough and simple forms in which he had the art of enveloping it. Supple and pliant with the placemen on whom the artists depended, he obtained a credit with the former, whose influence was dreaded by the latter. He insinuated himself into the company of men of information, and persuaded them to write memorials on the toys he had bought at his brokers; he made a magnificent collection of this trumpery, which he called antique; he proposed prizes on Isis and Osiris, in order to have the air of being himself initiated in their mysteries; and with this charlatanism of erudition, he crept into the academies without knowing either Greek or Latin. He had so often said, he had so often published, by those whom he paid to praise him, that in architecture he was the restorer of the simple style, of simple beauty, of beautiful simplicity, that the ignorant believed it: and by his correspondence with the *Dilettanti*, he made himself pass in Italy and in all Europe for the inspirer of the fine arts. I felt for him, then, that species of natural antipathy that ingenuous and simple men always feel for impostors.

After having dined at Madame Geoffrin's with men of letters or with the artists, I was again with her in the evening in a more intimate society; for she had also granted me the favour of admitting me to her little suppers. The feast was very moderate; it was commonly a chicken, some spinnage, an omelet. The company were not numerous; they consisted at most of five or six of her particular friends, or of three or four men and women of the first fashion, selected to their taste, and reciprocally happy to be together. But whatever these convivial circles might be, Bernard and I were admitted to them. One of them only had excluded Bernard, but had approved of me. The group that composed it consisted of three ladies and but one gentleman. The three ladies,

who might well be likened to the three goddesses of Mount Ida, were the beautiful Countess de Brionne, the beautiful Marchioness de Duras, and the charming Countess d'Egmont. Their Paris was the Prince Louis de Rohan. But I suspect that, at that time, he gave the apple to Minerva; for, to my mind, the Venus of the supper was the seducing and engaging d'Egmont. She was the daughter of Marshal Richelieu, and she had the vivacity, the wit, the graces of her father: she had too, as was said, his volatile and voluptuous disposition; but this was what neither Madame Geoffrin nor myself had any appearance of knowing. The young Marchioness de Duras, with as much of modesty as Madame d'Egmont had of charming grace, gave us the idea of Juno, by her noble severity, and by a character of beauty that had neither elegance nor delicacy. As for the Countess de Brionne, if she were not Venus herself, it was not that in the perfect regularity of her form, and of all her features, she did not unite all that can be imagined to paint ideal beauty. Of all charms, she wanted but one, without which there is no Venus on earth, and which formed the witchery of Madame D'Egmont; it was an air of voluptuousness. As to the Prince de Rohan, he was young, active, wild, with a good heart, lofty by starts, when in concurrence with dignities that rivalled his own, but gayly familiar with men of letters, who were free and simple like myself.

You may readily conceive that at these little suppers, my self-love was in league with all the means I might have of being amusing and agreeable. The new tales that I was then writing, and of which these ladies had the first offerings, were, before or after supper, an entertaining reading for them. They gave each other rendezvous to hear them, and when the little supper was prevented by any accident, they assembled at dinner at Madame de Brionne's. I confess that no success ever flattered me so sensibly as that which these readings obtained in this little circle, where wit, taste, beauty, all the graces were my judges, or rather my applauders. There was not a single trait, either in my colouring or my dialogue, however minutely delicate and subtle, that was not forcibly felt; and the pleasure I gave had the air of enchantment. What enraptured me, was to see so perfectly the most beautiful eyes in the world swimming in tears at the little touching scenes where I made love or nature weep. But in spite of the indulgence of an excessive politeness, I well perceived too the cold and feeble passages which they passed over in silence, as well as those where I had mistaken the word, the tone of nature; or the just shade of truth; and these passages I noted, to correct them at my leisure.

From the idea I give you of Madame Geoffrin's society, you will doubtless imagine that to me it might well have supplied the place of all other company. But I had some old and good friends at Paris, who were very happy to see me again, and with whom I was highly delighted to pass again some of my leisure hours. Madame Harene, Madame Desfourniels, Mademoiselle Clairon, and particularly Madame d'Heronville, had a right to partake of

my dearest moments, I had made myself too some new friends, whose society was very charming.

Beside I had well observed, that to be estimated by Madame Geoffrin at your real value, it was necessary to preserve with her a certain medium between negligence and assiduity; neither to let her complain of the one, nor weary herself with the other; and, in the attentions you shewed her, to neglect nothing, but to be prodigal of nothing. Eager attentions oppressed her: even of the most engaging society, she would only take just what suited her inclination, at her own hours and at her ease. I therefore imperceptibly sought occasion of having some sacrifice to make to her; and, in talking of the life I led in society, I made her understand, without affectation, that the time I passed at her house, might have been very gratefully spent elsewhere. It is thus that, during the ten years I was her tenant, without inspiring in her any very tender friendship, I never lost either her esteem or her favour; and, till her unfortunate paralytic affection, I never ceased to be of the number of those men of letters who were her convivial companions and her friends.

Yet I should tell the whole truth; Madame Geoffrin's society wanted one of the pleasures that I esteem most highly;—liberty of thought. With her gentle *come, that's well*, she never ceased to keep our minds as it were in leading-strings; and I partook of dinners elsewhere at which there was more freedom.

The freest, or rather the most licentious of all, was that which was given every week by a farmer-general, whose name was Pelletier, to eight or ten bachelors, all jovial friends. At this dinner, the men of the wildest heads were Collé and young Crébillon. Between them it was a continual assault of excellent pleasantry, and he that would mixed in the combat. They never indulged in personality; the self-love of talent was alone attacked, but it was attacked without indulgence; and it was requisite to shake it off and sacrifice it on entering the lists. Collé was brilliant there beyond all expression; and Crébillon, his adversary, had singularly the address of animating by exciting him. Wearied of being an idle spectator, I sometimes darted into the circle at my risk and peril, and I received lessons of modesty that were rather severe. Sometimes too a certain Monticourt would engage in the dispute, adroit and delicate in his pleasantry, and what was then called a banterer of the first rate. But the literary vanity, which he attacked with the arm of ridicule, afforded us no hold on him: in avowing himself destitute of talents, he rendered himself invulnerable to criticism. I used to compare him to a cat, that, lying on his back, with his paws in the air, only presented to us his claws. The rest of the company laughed at our attacks, and this pleasure was permitted them; but when gaiety, ceasing to indulge in raillery, quitted the arm of criticism, all were emulous of contributing to it. Bernard alone (for he too was of these dinners) kept himself always in reserve.

The contrast between the character of Bernard and his reputation, is a very singular thing. The nature of his poetry might well

have procured him, in his youth, the epithet of *Gentil*; but he was any thing rather than *gentil*, when I knew him. With women he had then only a worn out gallantry; and when he had said to one that she was fresh as Hebe, or that she had the complexion of Flora; to another that she had the smile of the graces, or the figure of the nymphs, he had said every thing to them. I have seen him at Choisy, at the *fete des roses*, which he celebrated there every year in a kind of little temple that he had decorated with opera scenes, and which, on that day, he ornamented with so many garlands of roses that the whole company complained of the head-ache. This *fete* was a supper, where the women fancied themselves all the divinities of spring. Bernard was the high-priest. Most certainly it was for him the moment of inspiration, had he been in the least susceptible of it: yet, even there, not a single sally, not one stroke of gaiety, nor a lively touch of gallantry, ever escaped him; he was there coldly polite. With men of letters, even in their most engaging mirth, he was still only polite; and in our serious and philosophical conversations, nothing could be more sterile than he. In literature, he had but a light superficial knowledge; he knew only his Ovid. Thus reduced almost to silence on all that was not circumscribed within the sphere of his ideas, he never had an opinion, and on no question of importance could any one ever say what Bernard had thought. He lived, as we say, on the reputation of his gallant poetry, which he had the prudence not to publish. We had foreseen its fate, when it should be printed: we knew that it was cold; an unpardonable vice, most particularly in a poem on the art of love: but such was the benevolence which his reserve, his modesty, his politeness inspired in us, that not one of us, so long as Bernard was living, ever divulged this fatal secret. I return to the dinner where Collé displayed a disposition so different from that of Bernard.

Never was the fire of gaiety of so regular and so fruitful a warmth. I cannot now tell you at what we laughed so much; but I well know that at every turn he made us all laugh till the tears started in our eyes. His fancy, when once exalted, made every thing appear comic and ridiculous. It is true, he often sinned against decency; but at this dinner we were not excessively severe on that point.

A singular incident broke up this jovial society. Pelletier fell in love with a fair adventurer, who made him believe that she was the daughter of Lewis XV. She used to go every Sunday to Versailles, to see, as she said, her sisters the princesses; and she always returned with some little present; it was a ring, a case, a watch, or a box with the portrait of one of these ladies. Pelletier, who had some understanding, but a weak and light head, believed all this; and in great mystery he married this little gipsy. From that time, you may well suppose that his house no longer suited us; and he, soon afterward, having discovered his mistake, and the shameful folly he had committed, became mad, and went to die at Charenton.

A more decent and more engaging freedom, a gaiety less wild, and yet very lively, reigned at the suppers of Madame Filleul, where the young countess de Séran shone in all the lustre of her nascent beauty and her mirthful simplicity. At these suppers, no one dreamt of displaying his wit; that was the least of the cares either of the hostess or her guests; and yet there was an infinity of it, and of the most natural and delicate kind. But before I describe the pleasures of this society, there is another whose charm is soon to cost me so dear that it cannot escape my memory. Observe, my dear children, by what a chain of circumstances fortuitously united, one of the most remarkable events of my life was introduced.

In the society of Madame Filleul, I again saw Cury; he was in misfortune, and I loved him the more tenderly. I have already said that in the time of his prosperity he had shewn me much kindness. Very lately again, he had invited me to pass with him and his intimate friends, a few charming days at Chénevière, his country house, near Andrese's, where he had a liberty for sporting. It was there that, at the sight of a picturesque cottage, I had invented the tale of the shepherdess of the Alps. Happy moment of calm and serenity, that was soon to be followed by a violent storm! There all the party were sportsmen, except myself: but I followed the sport, and on an island of the Seine where it passed, seated at the foot of a willow, my pencil in my hand, fancying myself on the Alps, I meditated on my tale, and took care of the dinner of our sportsmen. At their return, the keen and pure air of the river had served me for exercise, and gave me an appetite as voracious as theirs.

In the evening, a table covered with game they had killed, and crowned with bottles of excellent wine, offered a free field for mirth and licence. These, for Cury, were the last caresses and the deceitful adieus of faithless prosperity:

Hinc apicem rapax  
Fortuna cum stridore acuto  
Sustulit.

A little gaiety, in which he had permitted himself to indulge at the theatre at Fontainebleau in a prologue of his own, by turning into ridicule the gentlemen of the king's chamber, had alienated them from him; and after they had pretended to laugh at his pleasantry, they revenged themselves by compelling him to quit his place of intendant of the *Menus-Plaisirs*. The most stupid of these gentlemen, the most vain, the most choleric, was the Duke d'Aumont. He was obstinately bent on Cury's ruin; he was its principal cause, and he gloried in it. This alone made me conceive an aversion to this little duke. But I had personally some reason to be offended with him: the circumstances were these.

Madame de Pompadour having expressed a desire that the *Vanceslaus* of Rotrou should be purified of the coarseness of manners and of language which disfigured that tragedy, I had under-

taken, out of complaisance to her, that ungrateful task; and the players themselves, having, at the reading, approved my corrections, the tragedy had been got up and rehearsed with these changes, in order to be played at Versailles. But, Le Kain, who detested me (I have told the reason elsewhere) having pretended to adopt the corrections of his part, had played me the perfidious trick of re-establishing, without my knowledge, the old part as it used to be, which had bewildered all the other actors, and destroyed at every instant the continuity of dialogue, and all the effects of the scene. I had loudly complained of it as an infamy and unheard of insolence; and finding myself compromised in the debates it excited among the performers, I resolved, through the channel of the *Mercur*, to lay the conduct of Le Kain before the public, and give the lie to the reports that were spread by his cabal, when the Duke d'Aumont, who favoured him, had imposed silence on me. I too then had some good reason for not liking him.

Cury, in his adversity, had preserved as his friends the other intimates of the *Menus-Plaisirs*. One of them, with whom I was particularly intimate, Gagny, an amateur of painting and of French music, and one of the most habitual frequenters of the opera house, had taken a fair candidate of that theatre for his mistress; and he wanted to bring her out in the great parts of Lully, beginning with that of Oriane. He invited us, Cury and myself, and some other amateurs, to go and pass the Christmas holidays at his country house at Garges, to hear the new Oriane, and give her some instruction. You must take notice that Laferté, intendant of the *Menus*, and the beautiful Roserti, his mistress, were of this party of pleasure. The good cheer, the good wine, the good looks of our host, made us listen with admiration to the voice of Mademoiselle Saint Hilaire. Gagny thought he heard Le Maure; and, when dazzled with wine, we were all of his opinion.

All went on as well as possible, when one morning, I learnt that Cury was attacked with a cruel fit of the gout. I instantly went down to him. I found him by his fire-side with both his legs wrapped up in flannels, but writing on his knee, and laughing with the air of a satyr, for he had all the features of one. I would have spoken to him about his fit of the gout, but he made me a sign not to interrupt him, and with a crooked hand he finished what he was writing. "You have suffered very much," said I to him, "then; but I see that the pain is abated."—"I suffer still," said he to me, "but I do not laugh the less. You shall laugh too. You know with what fury the Duke d'Aumont has pursued me? I think it is not too much to revenge myself by a little malice; and here is what I have been ruminating the whole night in spite of the gout."

He had already written some thirty verses on the famous parody of *Cinna*; he read them to me, and I confess that, having found them very comic, I engaged him to continue. "Then let me write," said he to me, "for I am in the humour for it." I left him; and when, on hearing the bell, I descended to dinner, I found him, who had himself hobbled down, muffled up in fur, and

who, before the company assembled, was reading to Laferté and to Rosetti what he had read in the morning to me, and some more verses that he had added. At this second reading, I easily retained these mischievous verses from one end to the other, aided by the verses of Corneille, of which these were the parody, and which I knew all by heart. The next day Cury went on with his work, and I was always his confidant; so that on my return to Paris I carried away about fifty of these lines that my memory retained.

I know that, in rolling along, the snow-ball is grown big; but this is all that I believe came from the hand of Cury. I ought to add that in his verses there was no abuse, and I have seen some of the grossest in the copies that were multiplied of them.

In these copies, the general idea of the parody was preserved, but its details were almost all changed and disfigured. There were even passages that, not being designed on the verses of Corneille, had absolutely escaped the copyists. For example, in imitating the manner of giving his opinion, which had procured d'Argental the name of *Gobe-Mouche*, they had indeed strung together words without sense; but in these broken words, there was no ingenuity, and not a feature that resembled the passage of the parody where d'Argental opened thus:

Yes, I should think.....yet I will not dissemble,  
 One might.....for indeed you should.....but I tremble.  
 'Tis not after all, as you well may conceive,  
 That I care to indulge, or wish to deceive;  
 My cold enthusiasm is made for extremes.  
 But the poets themselves, and the players, it seems.....  
 I know not what to say, and yet, I surmise  
 That the all-safest course is the course of the wise.  
 It is for this reason alone that I balance,  
 My lord, and you know how my excellence  
 Debates and consults ere it dares to decide.  
 Le Kain, without doubt, would be your better guide;  
 What has ever escaped his acuteness? 'Tis he  
 That to you's so convincing, so striking to me.  
 I always maintain that in all our debates  
 There are.....we think we see what the fancy creates.  
 This is my opinion, my lord, I hazard it.  
 'Tis your's to decide.

This was the style and the tone of Cury's pleasantry. All those who were acquainted with him knew it as well as myself; and when the Duke d'Aumont said to his confidants:

And by your counsels alone, I shall be this year  
 A stage manager, or simple duke and peer.

When he replied to d'Argental, in admiring his eloquence:

You know not what to say! ah; that's saying enough.  
 You always say more than you think.



I cannot conceive how those who every day heard Cury's pleasantries did not recognise his ironical and delicate humour. In his earliest youth this turn of mind had signalised itself by a remarkable trait, and which was known.

His mother was on terms of very particular friendship with M. Poultier, the intendant of Lyon. One day when she was dining at his house in grand gala, and her son with her, he by the side of the intendant's wife, and his mother by the side of the intendant, M. Poultier having attracted the eyes of the company to a snuff-box they had not yet seen, said that it came from a hand that was infinitely dear to him.

Madame, is it your's or my mother's he means ?

Asked the young Cury, addressing himself to the intendant's wife. One of the party, wishing to give a proof of his erudition, observed that this was a verse from *Rodogune*. "No," replied M. Poultier, "it is from the *Etourdi*." This was checking impertinence with a vast deal of wit.

This trait and several others had rendered the talent of Cury celebrated for ingenious allusions. Fortunately it was forgotten. My head full of the parody that had just been confided to me, I arrived at Paris at Madame Geoffrin's, and the next day I heard this curious piece mentioned there. The two first verses only were quoted :

Let each then retire, and none enter : do you  
Le Kain stay with me, and your d'Argental too.

But this was enough to persuade me that it was already current in society, and I happened to say, smiling : "What ! you know no more than that ?" They instantly pressed me to tell what I knew of it ; "there were none present," said they, "but confidential friends," and Madame Geoffrin herself answered for the discretion of her little circle. I yielded ; I recited to them what I knew of the parody, and the next day I was denounced to the Duke d'Aumont, and by him to the king, as the author of this satire.

I was listening tranquilly at the opera house to the rehearsal of *Amadis*, in order to hear our Oriane, when some of my friends came to tell me that all Versailles was in arms against me ; that I was accused of being the author of a satire against the Duke d'Aumont ; that the first nobility of the court cried aloud for vengeance ; and that the Duke de Choiseul was at the head of my enemies.

I instantly returned home, and I wrote to the Duke d'Aumont to assure him that the verses that were attributed to me were not mine ; and that never having written a satire against any one, I certainly should not have begun with him. I should have stopped there. But in writing, I recollected that on the subject of *Venceslaus*, and the falsehoods that were published against me, the Duke d'Aumont had himself written to me to say that I ought to despise

such trifles, and that they would die of themselves if they were not kept alive by controversy. I thought it natural and just to return him his maxim, in which I was very foolish; and thus my letter was taken for a fresh insult, and the Duke d'Aumont produced it to the king as a proof of the resentment that had dictated the satire. Did I not accuse myself by ridiculing him whilst I disavowed it? My letter then did but inflame his anger and that of the whole court. I did not fail to go immediately to Versailles, and on arriving there I wrote to the Duke de Choiseul.

"My Lord Duke,

"I am told that you lend your ear to the voice that accuses me, and that solicits my ruin. You are powerful, but you are just; I am unfortunate, but I am innocent. I intreat you to hear me and to judge me.

"I am, &c."

The Duke de Choiseul wrote, for answer, at the bottom of my letter, *in half an hour*, and sent it back to me. In half an hour I went to his hotel, and I was introduced.

"You are desirous that I should hear you," said he; "I am willing to do so. What have you to say to me?" "That I have done nothing to merit the severe reception I experience from your grace, who have a soul so noble and so generous, and who never took pleasure in humbling the unfortunate." "But, Marmontel, how do you expect I should receive you after the infamous satire that you have just written against the Duke d'Aumont?" "I never wrote that satire; I have told him so himself." "Yes; and in your letter you have added a fresh insult, by offering him, in his own words, the counsel he had given you." "As that counsel was wise, I thought I might be allowed to recal it to his memory; I intended by it no insult." "Yet it is nevertheless an impertinence, permit me to tell you so." "I felt it so too after my letter was gone." "He is very much offended at it; and with reason." "Yes, to this I plead guilty, and I reproach myself with it as a total neglect of decorum. But would this neglect be a crime in the eyes of your grace?" "No; but the parody?" "The parody is not mine, I declare it to you as an honest man." "Is it not you who have recited it?" "Yes, what I knew of it, in a society where each tells all he knows; but I would not permit them to write it down, although they were very desirous of it." "Yet it is current." "Then those who give it currency have it from some other person." "And you, from whom had you it?" I was silent. "You," added he, "are said to have been the first who recited it, and recited it in such a way as to discover you were its author." "When I told what I knew of it," answered I, "it was already the subject of conversation, and the first verses were quoted. As to the manner in which I recited it, it would prove just as well that I have written the *Misantrape*, the *Tartuffe*, and *Cinna* itself; for I boast, my Lord, of reading each of those pieces as if I were its author." "But, to be short, this parody, from whom did you hear it? This is what you

should tell." "Pardon me, my Lord, that is exactly what I should not tell, and what I shall not tell." "I would wager it is from the author." "Well, my Lord, if it were from the author, ought I to name him?" "And how, without that, will you persuade the world that it is not yours? Appearances all accuse you. You had been irritated against the Duke d'Aumont; the cause of it is known: you have sought to revenge yourself. You have written this satire, and finding it comic, you have recited it: this is what the world says, this is what the world believes, and this is what the world has a right to believe. What do you answer to this?" "I answer, that this conduct would be that of a madman, of a fool, of a wretched idiot, and that the author of the parody is far from either of these characters. What! my Lord, the man that wrote it would have had the simplicity, the imprudence, the extravagance, of going to recite it himself, without mystery, in society? No; disguising his hand-writing, he would have made a dozen copies of it, which he would have addressed to the players, and to other malcontents about the court. I know as well as another these means of concealment, and had I been culpable I should have adopted them. Be pleased then to say to yourself, Marmontel, before six persons who were not his intimate friends, has recited what he knew of this parody: therefore he is not its author. His letter to the Duke d'Aumont is the letter of a man who fears nothing: he therefore felt himself strong in his innocence, and thought he had nothing to apprehend. This reasoning, my Lord, is the reverse of that which is opposed to me, and it is not the less conclusive. I have committed two imprudent mistakes: one is, that of reciting verses that my memory had caught, and of having told them without the author's consent." "Then you had really heard them from the author?" "Yes, from the author himself; for I will not tell you a falsehood. It is to him then that I am culpable, and that is my first fault. The other is that of having written to the Duke d'Aumont in a tone that seemed like irony, and was not sufficiently respectful. These are my two faults, I confess them, but I have no others." "I believe you," said he, "you speak like an honest man. Yet you are to be sent to the bastille. Call on M. de Saint Florentin; he has received the order from the king." "I will go to him," said I; "but may I flatter myself that you will no longer be among the number of my enemies. He promised it me with a good grace, and I went to the office of the minister who was to expedite my *lettre de cachet*."

He was well inclined to favour me. Without difficulty, he believed me innocent. "But what can I do," said he to me; the Duke d'Aumont accuses you, and insists on your being punished. It is a satisfaction he asks as a recompense for his services and the services of his ancestors. The king has chosen to grant it him. Go to M. de Sartine's. I address the king's order to him. You will tell him that you come to receive it by my direction." I asked him if I might be allowed to dine first at Paris: he permitted me to do so.

I was invited to dine that day with my neighbour M. de Vandésir, a man of talents and learning, who, under an unwelcome exterior, united an exquisite fund of literature, much politeness, and much amiability. Alas! his only son was that unfortunate Saint James, who, after having madly dissipated the great fortune he had left him, had gone to die insolvent at that bastille to which they were sending me.

After dinner, I confided my adventure to Vandésir, who bade me a tender adieu. I then went to M. de Sartine's, whom I did not find at home: he had gone out to dinner and would not be back till six o'clock. It was then five; I employed the interval in going to tell my good friend Madame Harene of my misfortune, and to comfort her. At six I returned to the minister of police. He knew nothing of my business, or he feigned to know nothing. I related it to him; he appeared concerned. "When we dined together," said he, "at Baron Holbach's, who could have foreseen that the first time I should see you again, would be to send you to the bastille? But I have not received the order. Let us see if it has come to my office in my absence." He sent for his secretaries and as they had heard nothing of it: "Go and sleep quietly at home," said he, "and return hither to-morrow at ten; that will be just as good."

I wished that evening to prepare the *Mercure* of the month. I sent, therefore, to ask two of my friends to supper; and, waiting their arrival, I went in to Madame Geoffrin's, to announce my calamity to her. She already knew something of it; for I found her cold and sorrowful. But, although my misfortune had taken its rise in her society, and that she herself had been the involuntary cause of it, I did not touch on that point, and I believe she was pleased with me for it.

The two friends I expected were Suard and Coste; the latter a young Toulousian, with whom I had been acquainted in his native city; the other, on whom I reckoned for life, was the friend my heart had chosen. He loved to keep me in that gentle illusion, by freely offering me himself opportunities of being useful to him. He would have offended me if he had appeared to doubt of the full right he had to dispose of me. The desire of employing them usefully to themselves had induced me to undertake a collection of the most curious pieces in the old *Mercures*. They selected them at their leisure; and the one hundred and twenty guineas, clear, that this part of my domain produced, was divided between them.

We passed a part of the night together in disposing every thing for the printing of the next *Mercure*; and, after having slept a few hours, I rose, packed up my things, and went to M. de Sartine's, where I found the officer who was to accompany me. M. de Sartine wanted that we should go to the bastille in separate carriages; but I refused this obliging offer; and my conductor and I arrived at the bastille in the same hackney-coach. I was received there in the council-chamber by the governor and his staff-officers; and there I began to perceive that I was well recommended. This governor, M. Abadie, after having read the letters which the offi-

cer had presented to him, asked me whether I wished to have my servant left me, but on condition that we should be in the same chamber, and that he should only quit the prison with me. This servant was Bury. I consulted him about it; he answered that he would not leave me. My parcels and books were then lightly examined, and I was conducted into a large room, whose furniture consisted of two beds, two tables, the bottom of a chest of drawers, and three straw chairs. It was cold; but a jailor made us a good fire, and brought me wood in abundance. At the same time they gave me pens, ink, and paper, on condition of giving an exact account of the employment and number of sheets with which they should furnish me.

Whilst I was preparing my table to set myself to write, the jailor came back to inquire whether I were satisfied with my bed. After having examined it, I answered that the mattresses were bad, and the blankets dirty. In a minute they were all changed: they sent to ask too at what hour I dined! I answered at their usual hour. The bastille had a library; the governor sent me the catalogue, giving me the choice of the books that composed it. I thanked him for myself; but my servant asked for the novels of Prévost, and they were brought him.

On my part, I had provision enough to save me from weariness. I had long been impatient at the contempt that men of letters expressed for the poem of Lucan, which they had never read, and which they knew only by the barbarous and bombastic version of Brebœuf; and I had resolved to translate it more decently and more faithfully in prose; and this employment, that would occupy, without fatiguing me, appeared well suited to the solitary leisure of my prison. I had therefore brought with me the Pharsalia; and, to understand it better, I had taken care to add Cæsar's commentaries.

Here then I was by the side of a good fire, meditating on Cæsar's dispute with Pompey, and forgetting mine with the Duke d'Aumont. There was Bury on his part, as much a philosopher as I, amusing himself with making our beds, placed in the two opposite angles of my chamber, which was lighted at that moment by a clear winter's day, notwithstanding the bars of two strong iron grates that just left me a view of the Fauxbourg Saint-Antoine.

Two hours afterward, the bolts of the two doors that inclosed me, awoke me, by their noise, from my profound reverie; and two jailors, loaded with a dinner, which I supposed mine, came and served it in silence. One places, before the fire, three little dishes covered with plates of common earthen ware; whilst the other lays a coarse, but clean cloth, on the table that was vacant. I saw him put on the table a clean pewter spoon and fork, some good household bread, and a bottle of wine. Having done this, the two jailors retire, and the two doors are again closed, with the same sound of locks and of bolts.

Bury then invites me to place myself at table, and he serves me up the soup. It was a Friday: this soup, *en maigre*, was a white bean soup, made with the freshest butter, and a dish of these same beans was the first that Bury put on my table. I found all

this very good. The dish of cod-fish that he brought me for my second course was still better. A little point of garlick seasoned it with a delicacy of flavour and of smell, that would have flattered the palate of the most dainty Gascon. The wine was not excellent, but it was passable. No desert: it was requisite to be deprived of something. On the whole, I found that one dined very well in prison.

As I rose from table, and as Bury was going to seat himself at it (for there was enough for his dinner in what remained), the two jailors re-entered with pyramids of new dishes in their hands. At the appearance of this service in fine linen, in beautiful porcelain, silver spoon and fork, we recognised our mistake; but we took no notice of it, and when our jailors had set all this down, and were retired, "Sir," said Bury to me, "you have just eaten my dinner; allow me in my turn to eat yours." "That is but just," answered I; and the walls of my chamber were, I believe, quite astonished to re-echo a laugh.

This dinner was *gras*; it consisted of an excellent soup, a slice of juicy beef, the leg of a boiled capon swimming in its gravy, and melting in the mouth, a little dish of fried artichokes in marinade, one of spinage, a very fine Crésanne pear, some grapes, a bottle of old Burgundy, and some of the best Moca coffee; this was Bury's dinner, with the exception of the coffee and the fruit, which he chose to reserve for me.

In the afternoon the governor came to see me, and inquired if I were satisfied with my dinner, assuring me that it should be served from his table, that he would take care to carve for me himself, and that no other person should touch it. He proposed a chicken for my supper; I thanked him, and said that the fruit I left at my dinner would suffice for me. You see what was my ordinary fare at the bastille, and you may conclude with what mildness, or rather with what repugnance they consented to use against me the anger of the Duke d'Aumont.

I had every day a visit from the governor. As he had some tincture of literature, and even of Latin, he took pleasure in observing the progress of my work; he was delighted with it. But soon stealing himself from these little recreations, "Adieu," said he, "I am going to console those who are far more unfortunate than you." The attentions he shewed to me might well be no proof of his humanity; but I had besides a very faithful testimony of it. One of the jailors had conceived a friendship for my servant, and he soon became familiar with me. One day then, as I was speaking to him of the feeling and compassionate disposition of M. Abadie, "Ah!" said he, "he is the best of men; he has taken this place, that is so painful to him, only to soften the lot of the prisoners. He has succeeded a hard and avaricious man, who treated them very ill; so that when he died, and M. Abadie took his place, the change was felt even to the dungeons; you would have said" (a very strange expression in the mouth of a jailor), "you would have said that a sun-beam had penetrated into these cells. People to whom we are forbidden to tell what passes without, asked us what had happened? In short, Sir, you see how your

servant is fed ; almost all our prisoners are as well fed as he ; and the comforts it depends on him to give them, comfort him, for he suffers when he sees them suffer."

I need not tell you that this jailor himself was a good man in his profession ; and I took great care not to disgust him with this profession, in which compassion is so precious and so rare.

The manner in which I was treated at the bastille made me well conceive that I should not be there long ; and my translation, intermixed with interesting reading (for I had with me Montaigne, Horace, and La Bruyère) left me but few weary moments. There was one thing only that sometimes plunged me in melancholy ; the walls of my chamber were covered with inscriptions that all bore the character of the sad and sombre reflections with which, before me, some unhappy sufferers had doubtless been oppressed in this prison. I used to think I still saw them wandering and lamenting, and their shades encompassing me.

But a circumstance that was personal to me, occurred to torment my fancy more cruelly. In speaking of the society of Madame Harene, I have not mentioned an excellent man whose name was Durant, who had some friendship for me, but who was otherwise only remarkable for a charming simplicity of manners.

One morning then, on the ninth day of my captivity, the major of the bastille entered my chamber, and with a grave and cold air, without any preamble, he asked me if a man of the name of Durant was known to me. I answered that I knew a man of that name. Then, seating himself to write, he continued his interrogatory. The age, the height, the features of this Durant, his profession, his abode, how long I had known him, in what house ; nothing was forgotten, and at each of my answers the major wrote with a face of marble. At last, having read to me my interrogatory, he presented to me the pen in order to sign it ; I sign it, and he withdraws.

He has scarcely left my room, when all the most sinister possibilities seize on my imagination. What then can this good Durant have done ? He goes every morning to the coffee-house ; he has there undertaken my defence ; he has spoken with too much warmth against the Duke d'Aumont ; he has indulged in murmurs against a partial, unjust, oppressive authority, that crushes a feeble and innocent man to gratify the powerful. On the imprudence of these remarks, he has been arrested ; and on my account, and for my sake, he will groan in a prison more rigorous than mine. Weak as he is, much older, and much more timid than I, melancholy will seize him, and he will sink under it ; I shall be the cause of his death. And poor Madame Harene, and all our good friends, in what a situation must they be ! Great God ! what evils my imprudence will have created ! It is thus that in the fancy of a captive, isolated, solitary man, in the bonds of absolute power, reflection aggrandises all evil presages, and encircles his soul with dire presentiment. From that moment I did not get one moment of refreshing sleep. All the dishes that the governor reserved for me with so much care, were steeped in bitterness. All that is most vital in me felt wounded ; and if my de-

tention in the bastille had continued a week longer, it would have been my tomb.

In this situation, I received a letter that was forwarded to me by M. de Sartine. It was from Mademoiselle S\*\*, a beautiful and interesting girl, with whom I was on the point of being united before my imprisonment. In this letter she expressed to me, in the most touching manner, the sincere and tender part she took in my misfortune, assuring me that it had not alarmed her courage, and that, far from enfeebling her sentiments for me, it rendered them more lively and more constant.

I answered, first by expressing all my sensibility for so generous a friendship. But I added, that the great lesson I received from adversity was never to associate any one to the unforeseen dangers and sudden revolutions to which the perilous condition of a man of letters exposed me; and that if, in my situation, I felt some courage, I owed it to my isolated existence; that my senses would have been already lost, if I had left without my prison a wife and children in affliction; and that at least on that side, which to me would be the most cruelly tender, I never would give adversity any hold on me.

Mademoiselle S\*\* was more stung than wounded at my answer; and a little while afterward she consoled herself by marrying M. S\*\*.

At length, on the eleventh day of my detention, at the close of day, the governor came to announce that my liberty was restored to me; and the same officer who had conducted me, took me back to M. de Sartine's. This minister expressed some joy at seeing me again, but his joy was mixed with sadness. "Sir," said I, "in your kindness, for which I am very grateful, there is something that still afflicts me; while you congratulate me, you have the air of pitying me. Have you some new misfortune to announce to me?" (I thought of Durant.)—"Alas! yes," answered he, "and do you not suspect it? The king has taken the *Mercur* from you." These words comforted me, and, expressing my resignation, by gently inclining my head, "So much the worse for the *Mercur*," answered I.—"The evil," added he, "is perhaps not without remedy. M. de Saint-Florentine is at Paris; he interests himself for you; go and call on him to-morrow morning.

On quitting M. de Sartine's, I ran to Madame Harene's, impatient to see Durant. I found him there, and amid the joyous acclamations of the whole society, I saw only him. "Ah! there you are," said I, throwing myself into his arms; "then I am indeed comforted!" This transport, at the sight of a man for whom I had entertained no very passionate sentiment, astonished the whole company. They thought that the bastille had disordered my brain. "Ah! my dear friend," said Madame Harene, embracing me, "what heartfelt joy it gives me to see you again at liberty! And the *Mercur*?—"The *Mercur* is lost," said I. "But, madam, permit me to occupy myself a moment with this unfortunate man. What can he have done to cause me so much affliction?" I related the history of the major. The truth was, that Durant had gone to solicit from M. de Sartine permission to



see me, and he had said that he was my friend. M. de Sartine had sent to enquire of me who this Durant was; and of this very simple question the major had made a string of interrogatories. Enlightened and tranquil on that subject, I employed my courage in raising the hopes of my friends; and after having received from them a thousand marks of the most tender interest, I went to see Madame Geoffrin.

"Well, here you are again," said she; "heaven be praised! The king has taken the *Mercur* from you! The Dûke d'Aumont is highly delighted, and this will teach you to write letters."—"And to recite verses," added I, smiling. She inquired if I were not going to commit some new folly. "No, madam, but I am going to try to remedy those I have already committed." As she was really afflicted at my adverse fortune, she was obliged to quarrel with me in order to comfort herself: "why had I written these verses?" "I never wrote them," said I.—"Why then did you repeat them?"—"Because it was you who requested it." "But, did I know that they contained so severe a satire? Was it necessary for you, who knew it, to boast of that knowledge? What imprudence! And then your good friends, de Presle and Vandesir, who go publishing about that you are sent to the bastille on your parole, with all kinds of attention and indulgence!"—"Ought it then, madam, to be believed, that I was dragged to prison like a criminal?"—"They should have been silent; people in power must not be braved. Marshal Richelieu has taken care to observe that he had been twice led to the bastille like a culprit, and that it was very singular that you should be treated better than he."—"That is indeed, madam, a most worthy object of envy for Marshal Richelieu!"—"Ah! yes, sir, people are hurt at any indulgence shewn to him who offends them, and employ all their credit to be revenged on him; that is natural. Do you expect they will suffer themselves to be injured, without indulging resentment?"—"I pity them!" cried I, with an air of contempt. But soon perceiving that my replies irritated her, I thought proper to be silent. At last, when she had wholly unburdened her heart, I rose with a modest air, and wished her a good morning.

The next morning, I was scarcely awake when Bury, entering my chamber, announced Madame Geoffrin. "Well, my dear neighbour," said she, "and how did you sleep?"—"Exceedingly well, madam; neither the sound of the bolts, nor the cry of the sentinels has interrupted my rest."—"And I," said she, "I have not closed my eyes."—"Why so, madam?"—"Why? don't you know the reason? I have been cruel and unjust. Yesterday evening I loaded you with reproaches. 'Tis thus we are: from the moment a man is unfortunate, we crush him, and turn all his conduct into crime" (and she began to weep).—"Good God! madam," said I, "do you still think of what passed yesterday? As for me, I had forgotten it. If it ever recur to me, it will be only as a mark of your kindness for me. Each has his way of loving: yours is to scold your friends for the misfortunes they bring on themselves, as a mother scolds a child when he falls."

These words consoled her. She asked me what I was going to do. "I am going," said I, "to follow the advice that M. de Sartines has given me, and call on M. de Saint-Florentin; from thence I shall go to Versailles, and see, if possible, Madame de Pompadour, and the Duke de Choiseul. But I am perfectly cool, and am fully master of my feelings; I shall behave as I ought, never fear." Such was this conversation; which, I think, does as much honour to the character of Madame Geoffrin as any one of the good actions of her life.

M. de Saint-Florentin appeared concerned at my fate. He had done for me all that his weakness and his timidity had permitted him to do; but neither Madame de Pompadour nor M. de Choiseul had seconded him. Without explaining himself, he approved my going to see both of them, and I hastened to Versailles.

Madame de Pompadour, to whose house I first went, sent me word by Quesnai, that, in the present circumstances, she could not see me. I was not surprised at it; I had no right to expect that she should make herself powerful enemies for me.

The Duke de Choiseul received me, but to load me with reproof. "It is truly with regret," said he, "that I again see you in misfortune; but you have done every thing you could to deserve it; and your faults are so aggravated, by your imprudence, that those who were most inclined to favour you have been obliged to abandon you." "What then have I done, my Lord? What can I have done within the walls of my prison, to have added another fault to those of which I accused myself before you?" "First," replied he, "on the day you should have gone to the bastille, you went to the opera to boast, with an insulting air, that you were sent to the bastille only in derision, and out of vain complaisance for a duke and peer, against whom you had never ceased to declaim in the lobbies of the theatre, against whom you have written the most abusive letters to the army; and against whom you have made, not alone, but with others, the parody of Cinna, at a supper at Mademoiselle Clairon's, with the Count de Valbelle, the Abbé Galiani, and other jovial companions: this is what you did not tell me, and what we are assured is true."

While he was speaking to me, I endeavoured to recollect myself; and when he had finished, I addressed him in my turn. "My Lord Duke," said I, "your favour is dear to me; your esteem is still more precious to me than your favour, and I consent to lose both your favour and your esteem, if there be one word of truth in all these tales that have been told you." "What," cried he, proudly raising himself, "there is no truth in what I have just said to you!" "Not one syllable; and I entreat you to permit me to sign, on your table, article by article, what I am going to answer to these charges."

"The day on which I should have gone to the bastille, I certainly had no desire to go to the opera." And after having given him an exact account of the employment of my time after I had left him—"Send to know," added I, "of M. de Sartines and of Madame Harene, the time I passed with them: it was precisely the hours of the opera."

"As to the lobbies of the theatre, it happens by accident, that, for six months, I have never set foot in them. The last time that any one has seen me there (and the epoch is present to me), was at the *debut* of Duranci, and even before, I defy any man to cite one injurious expression of mine against the Duke d'Aumont."

"By an accident no less fortunate, my Lord, it happens that, since the campaign opened, I have never written to the army; and if any one can shew me a letter, or a note, that he has received there from me, I consent to be dishonoured."

"With respect to the parody, it is a complete falsehood, that it was written at the suppers, or in the company of Mademoiselle Clairon. I even assert that I never heard a single verse of this parody at her house; and if it has been talked of there since it was known, as is very possible, it has not been before me."

"These four assertions, my Lord, I will write and sign on your table, if you will allow me; and be assured, that no man on earth can prove to you the contrary, nor will dare to maintain it in my face, and before you."

You will easily believe that, in listening to me, the vivacity of the Duke de Choiseul was a little moderated. "Marmontel," said he, "I see that I have been imposed on. You speak to me in a tone that leaves me no doubt of your sincerity; truth only could hold that language. But you must put it in my power to affirm that the parody is not yours. Tell me its author, and the *Mercur* is restored to you." "The *Mercur*, my Lord, will never be restored to me at that price." "Why so?" "Because I prefer your esteem to six hundred a year." "By heaven," said he, "since the author has not the honesty to avow himself, I know not why you should be so tender of him." "Why, my Lord? because, after having imprudently abused his confidence, the height of injustice would be, to betray it. I have been indiscreet, but I will not be perfidious. He did not confide to me these verses to publish them. It is a larceny that my memory committed on him; and, if this larceny deserve punishment, it is I who should suffer: heaven forbid that he should declare himself, or that he should be known! I should then be indeed culpable! I should die with grief at his misfortune, for I should have caused it. But, at present, what is my crime? That of having done what each does in society without mystery. And you yourself, my Lord, permit me to ask you whether, in a convivial circle, you have never told the epigram, the comic verses, or the satirical couplets you had heard? Who, before me, was ever punished for that? *Les Philippiques*, you well know, was an infernal work. The regent, the second person in the kingdom, was calumniated in it in an atrocious manner; and this infamous work was in every mouth; it was dictated, written down; there were a thousand copies of it; and yet who, beside the author, has ever been punished for it? I happened to know some verses, I recited them; I suffered no one to copy them; and the whole crime of these verses is, to turn the vanity of the Duke d'Aumont into ridicule. Such is the brief state of the case. If a plot of murder, or a crime of magnitude were in question, you would have a right to compel

me to denounce its author. 'But for a joke, in truth, it is not worth the while to take on myself the infamous part of an informer; and were not only my fortune, but my life, at stake, I would say with Nicomède—

The master who taught and instructed my youth,  
Ne'er taught me meanness."

I perceived that the Duke de Choiseul thought there was something comic in my little pride; and, to make me feel it, he asked me, smiling, who had been my Hannibal? "My Hannibal, my Lord," answered I, "is adversity, that has long tried me, and taught me to suffer."

"Come," said he, "this is what I call an honest man." Seeing then that he was shaken—"It is this honest man," answered I, "whom they oppress, in order to gratify the Duke d'Aumont, without any other motive than his complaint; without any other proof than his word. What dreadful tyranny!"

Here the Duke de Choiseul stopped me. "Marmontel," said he, "the patent of the *Mercur* was a favour from the king; he withdraws it when he pleases; there is no tyranny in that." "My Lord," replied I, "from the king to me the patent of the *Mercur* is a favour; but between the Duke d'Aumont and me the *Mercur* is my property, and, by a false accusation, he has no right to deprive me of it.....But no, it is not I whom he despoils, it is not I whom they immolate to his vengeance. To glut his appetite, they sacrifice more innocent victims. Know, my Lord, that at the age of sixteen, having lost my father, and seeing myself surrounded with orphans like myself, and with a poor and numerous family, I promised to serve them all as a father. I called heaven and nature to witness my promise, and from that time to the present moment I have faithfully fulfilled it. I live on little; I can reduce my wants and my expences. But this crowd of unfortunate beings who subsist on the fruit of my labour; but two sisters to whom I was about to give a little dowry to fix them in life; but women whose age needed a little ease; but my mother's sister, a widow poor and burdened with children, what will become of them? I had flattered them with the hope of comfort; they already felt the influence of my fortune; the favour to which I owed it was a spring that should never cease to flow for them; and they will now suddenly learn!.....Ah! 'tis there the Duke d'Aumont should go to relish the fruits of his vengeance; 'tis there that he will hear doleful cries and see tears flow. Let him go thither and count his victims, and the wretches he has plundered; let him go and drink the tears of infancy and age, and insult the miserable beings whose bread he tears from them. 'Tis there that his triumph awaits him. I am told he has asked it as a reward for his services; he should have said as wages; they are indeed worthy of his heart." At these words my tears began to flow; and the Duke de Choiseul, as much affected as myself, said, embracing me—"My dear Marmontel, you wound me to the heart; I have, perhaps, done you much injury, but I'll go and repair it."

Then taking his pen, with his natural vivacity, he wrote to the Abbé Barthelemy—"My dear abbé, the king has granted you the patent of the *Mercure*; but I have just seen and heard Marmontel; he has touched me, he has persuaded me of his innocence; it would not become you to accept the spoil of an innocent man. Refuse the *Mercure*; I will indemnify you for it." He wrote to M. de Saint Florentin—"You have received, my dear friend, the king's order to expedite the patent of the *Mercure*; but I have seen Marmontel, and I want to speak to you about him. Press nothing till we have talked together." He read me these notes, sealed them, sent them off, and told me to go and see Madame de Pompadour, giving me a note for her which he did not read to me, but which was highly in my favour; for I was introduced as soon as she had cast her eyes on it.

Madame de Pompadour was indisposed and kept her bed. I approached her; I had first to endure the same reproof I had just experienced from the Duke de Choiseul; and with still more mildness I opposed to it the same answers. Afterward—"These then," said I to her, "are the new crimes that are imputed to me, in order to induce the king, after eleven days imprisonment, to extend his severity so far as to pronounce my ruin! Had I been free, Madam, I should perhaps have penetrated to you. I should have contradicted these falsehoods, and, by avowing to you my true and only fault, I might have found pardon in your eyes. But they begin by obtaining my detention within the walls of a prison; they profit by the time of my captivity to calumniate me with impunity, quite at their ease; and the gates of the bastille only open to me that I may see the abyss they have dug beneath my steps. But it is not enough to plunge me and my unhappy family into ruin; they know that a hand which delights in relief can again extricate us; they fear lest this hand, from which we have already received so many benefits, should again become our aid; they take from us this last and only hope; and because the pride of the Duke d'Aumont is irritated, a crowd of innocent beings must be deprived of all consolation. Yes, Madam, such has been the objects of these falsehoods, which, by inducing you to think me either mad or malicious, stole from me your esteem. This is, above all, the tender feeling part by which my enemies have contrived to pierce me to the soul.

"Now, that I may be without defence, they require that I should name the author of this parody, some verses of which I have known and recited. They know me well enough, madam, to be very certain that I shall never name him. But not to accuse him, they say, is condemning myself; and if I will not be infamous, I am ruined. Most certainly, if I can only save myself at this price, my ruin is fully decided. But in what age, madam, was it a crime to be honest? When was the accused obliged to prove himself innocent, and the accuser been exempt from proof? Yet I am willing to repel by proofs an attack that has none; and my proofs are my writings, my known character, and my conduct through life. Since I have had the misfortune to be numbered among men of letters, all the satirical writers have been my ene-

mies. There is no insolence that I have not received from them and patiently endured. Let any one cite an epigram, a touch of satire, an irony, in short a raillery, of mine, that approaches the character of this parody; and I consent to have it imputed to me. But if I have disdained such revenge, if my pen, always decent and temperate, has never been dipped in gall, why, on the word and faith of a man who is blinded with anger, is it to be believed that this pen has begun to distil its venom upon him? I am calumniated, madam, I am so to you, I am so to that good king who cannot believe that he is imposed on; and without the generous pity I have just inspired in the Duke de Choiseul, neither the king nor yourself, would ever have known that I was calumniated."

I had scarcely finished when the Duke de Choiseul was announced. He had lost no time; for I had left him at his toilette. "Well, madam," said he, "you have heard him! What do you think of all he endures?"—"That it is horrible," answered she, "and that the *Mercur* must be restored to him."—"That is my opinion," said the Duke de Choiseul. "But," replied she, "it is not fit that the king should appear to change so completely in a few hours. It is the Duke d'Aumont himself who must take some steps....." "Ah! madam, you pronounce my sentence," exclaimed I: "he will never take the step that you are desirous he should take."—"He will do it," insisted she. "M. de Saint Florentin is with the king; he is coming to call on me, and I will speak to him. Go and wait for him at his hotel."

The old minister was not better pleased than myself with the turn that the weakness of Madame de Pompadour took, and he did not dissemble to me that he thought it a bad omen. Indeed, the obstinate pride of the Duke d'Aumont was relentless. Neither the Count d'Angiviller, his friend, nor Bouvart, his physician, nor the Duke of Duras, his comrade, could inspire him with any sentiment that was at all noble. As he had nothing in himself that could command respect, he pretended at least to make himself feared; and he only returned to the court fully determined not to suffer himself to yield, declaring that he should consider those as his enemies who spoke to him of any step in my favour. None dared to oppose one of the men who approached nearest the person of the king; and all the interest they took in me was reduced to securing me a pension of one hundred and twenty guineas on the *Mercur*: the Abbé Barthelimi refused the patent of it; and it was granted to one Lagarde, Madame de Pompadour's librarian, the worthy *protege* of Colin her steward.

Ten years afterward, the Duke de Choiseul, in dining with me, reminded of our conversations, to which, he said, he could well have wished that we had had some witnesses. I have been able to give you, from recollection, only a slight sketch of it, and such as my memory, long cooled, could retrace it to me. But the circumstances must have inspired me very strongly; for he added, that he had never in his life heard a man so eloquent as I was on that occasion; and, talking on this subject, "Do you know," said he, "what prevented Madame de Pompadour from getting

you back the *Mercure*? It was that knave Colin, to obtain it for his friend Lagarde." This Lagarde had so bad a fame that, in the society of the *Menus Plaisirs*, when he was suffered, they called him *Lagarde-Bicêtre*. It was then, my dear children, to Lagarde-Bicêtre that they sacrificed me; and the Duke de Choiseul confessed it to me!

As destitute of information as of talents, this new editor did his work so ill, that the *Mercure* was decried and fell; and the affrighted pensioners perceived that it would very soon be incapable of paying the pensions that were charged on it. They came to intreat me to consent to resume it, and offered to go in a body and request that it might be restored to me. But having once quitted this importunate chain, I would not be loaded with it again. Fortunately Lagarde dying, the *Mercure* was conducted a little less ill, and fell more slowly into decay. But to save the pensions, it at length became necessary to make it a bookseller's speculation.

## BOOK VII.

MY adventure with the Duke d'Aumont had done me two essential services; it had induced me to renounce a project of marriage lightly formed, and of which I have since had reason to believe that I should have repented; and it had sown for me in the breast of Bouvart the seeds of that friendship which has been so salutary to me. But these good offices were not the only ones which the Duke d'Aumont rendered me by his persecution.

In the first place, my soul, enfeebled by the dissipations of Paris, of Avenay, of Passy, and of Versailles, needed some adverse fortune to restore to it its ancient temper and the elasticity it had lost: the Duke d'Aumont had taken care to give new vigour to my courage and to my character. In the second place, without employing me very seriously, the *Mercure* never ceased to hold my attention captive, to consume my time, to steal me from myself, to prevent me from undertaking any thing honourable to my talents, and to subject them to a minute and almost mechanical compilation; the Duke d'Aumont had set them at liberty, and had restored to me the happy importunate want of making a worthy and noble use of them. In fine, I had resolved to sacrifice eight or ten of the best years of my life to this ungrateful journal, with the hope of amassing four or five thousand pounds, to which I limited my ambition. But the leisure, which the Duke d'Aumont had procured me, was worth nearly as much to me in the same number of years, without abridging any of my social plea-

tures in town, or in those delicious retreats where I passed the three gay seasons of the year.

I do not reckon the advantage of having been received at the French academy sooner than I should have been, had I only attended to the *Mercure*. It was not the intention of the Duke d'Aumont to lead me there by the hand. Yet he did it without wishing it, and even against his inclination.

I have observed more than once, and in the most critical circumstances of my life, that when fortune has appeared most adverse to me, she has served me more essentially than I myself should have asked. Here you behold me ruined; and from the midst of this ruin, my dear children, you will soon see me rise in the enjoyment of the most equal, the most quiet, the most undisturbed happiness that a man of my profession can hope to possess. To establish it solidly, and on its natural basis, I mean on the repose of the mind and the soul, I began by freeing myself of my domestic inquietudes. Age or disease, that, in particular, which seemed to be contagious in my family, successively diminished the number of those dear relations to whom I had so much pleasure in affording a comfortable existence. I had already persuaded my aunts to decline all trade, and, after having liquidated our debts, I had added pensions to the revenue of my little farm. Now these pensions of twelve guineas each, being reduced to five, I had first half my pension of one hundred and twenty guineas on the *Mercure* left me; I had beside twenty guineas interest on the four hundred guineas I had employed in giving security for M. Odde; to this I added an annuity of twenty-three pounds on the Duke of Orleans, and, with what I had left on closing the accounts of the *Mercure*, I bought some stock. So that, for my lodgings, for my servant, and myself, I had little less than one hundred and twenty guineas to spend. I never had spent more. Madame Geoffrin wished the payment of my rent to cease from that time; but I begged her to let me try another year if my faculties could not answer all my wants, assuring her that, if my rent oppressed me, I would confess it to her without blushing. I was not driven to this necessity. Most unhappily the number of pensions I paid diminished by the death of my two sisters, who were in the convent at Clermont, and who were torn from me by the same disorder of which our father and mother had died. A little time afterward, I lost my two old aunts, the only two who remained at home. Death left me only my mother's sister, my aunt d'Albois, who is still living. Thus, I every year inherited some of the benefits I had conferred. Beside, the first editions of my Tales began to enrich me.

Tranquil with regard to fortune, my sole ambition was the French academy; and this ambition itself was temperate and peaceful. Before I should attain my fortieth year, I had still three years to give to my literary labours; and in three years I should have acquired new titles to this distinction. My translation of Lucan advanced; at the same time I was preparing the materials for my art of poetry, and the celebrity of the tales perpetually increased



with every new edition. I thought the prospect before me mild and enchanting

You have seen in what a courteous way the friendly Bouret had begun with me. The acquaintance once made, the intimacy formed, his societies had been mine. In one of the tales of *La Veillée*, I have painted the character of his fair and most intimate friend, the beautiful Madame Gaulard. One of her two sons, an engaging man, held the place of receiver-general at Bordeaux; he had made a journey to Paris, and the day before his departure, one of the most beautiful days in the year, we were dining together at our friend Bouret's, in good and charming company. The magnificence of this hotel, which the arts had decorated, the sumptuousness of the table, the nascent verdure of the gardens, the serenity of a pure sky, and, above all, the amiability of the host, who, in the midst of his guests, seemed to be the lover of all the women, the best friend of all the men; in fine, all that could spread good humour at a feast, had there exhilarated every soul. I, who felt myself the freest and most independent of men, was like a bird that, escaped from the net that held him captive, darts into the air with joy; and, to be sincere, the excellent wine, with which they filled my glass, contributed to give wings to my soul, and to my fancy.

In the midst of this gaiety, the youngest son of Madame Gaulard took farewell of us; and, in talking to me of Bordeaux, he asked if he could render me any service there? "Yes," said I, "that of kindly receiving me there, when I shall visit that beautiful port and opulent city; for, in the dreams of my life, that is one of my most interesting projects." "Had I known that," said he, "you might have executed it to-morrow: I had a place to offer you in my chaise." "And I," said one of the company to me (it was a Jew, whose name was Gradis, one of the richest merchants in Bordeaux), "I would have undertaken to send your trunks." "My trunks," said I, "would not have been heavy; but how should I get to Paris again?" "In six weeks," replied Gaulard, "I would have brought you back." "And is all this no longer possible?" I asked. "Very possible on our part," they replied, "but we set off to-morrow." Then, whispering three words to the faithful Bury, who was waiting on me at dinner, I sent him to pack up my things; and instantly drinking the health of my fellow-travellers, "You see me ready," said I, "and we are off to-morrow." The whole company applauded so active a resolution, and all drank the health of the travellers.

It is difficult to imagine a more agreeable journey; an excellent road, weather so beautiful, so mild, that we travelled all night, sleeping, with the glasses down. The directors and receivers were every where eager to welcome us: I fancied myself in those poetic days, and in those beautiful climates, where hospitality shewed itself in *fêtes*.

At Bordeaux I was received and treated as well as it was possible: that is, they gave me good dinners, excellent wine, and even salutes from the ships I visited. But, though there were in this city men of cultivated minds, and formed to engage, I enjoy-

ed less of their converse than I could have wished. A fatal passion for gaming possessed them, clouded their minds, and absorbed their souls. I had every day the vexation of seeing some one oppressed with the loss he had sustained. They appeared to dine and sup together only to fall on each other with murderous hands as they rose from table; and this cruel cupidity, mixed with social enjoyments and social afflictions, was to me something monstrous.

Nothing could be more dangerous for a receiver-general than such society. However accurate he might be in his accounts, his sole quality of receiver should forbid him the gaming table, as a rock, if not of his fidelity, at least of the confidence that is reposed in him; and I was not useless to my friend, in strengthening him in the resolution of never suffering himself to be affected by the contagion of example.

Another cause diminished the pleasure that my residence at Bordeaux would have given me; the maritime war made deep wounds in the commerce of that great city. The beautiful canal, that was full in my view, offered me but the wrecks of it. But I easily formed an idea of what it must be in a state of peace and flourishing prosperity.

The houses of some merchants, where there was no play, were those I most frequented, and that best suited me. But there was not one that had so much attraction for me as that of Ansely. This merchant was an English philosopher, of a venerable character. His son, though then very young, announced those qualities that ennoble man; and his two daughters, without being beautiful, had a native charm in their mind and manners that delighted me as much and more than beauty would have done. The youngest of the two, Jenny, had made a lively impression on my soul. It was for her that I composed the romance of *Pétrarque*, and I sang it to her as I bade her farewell.

In the leisure that society left me in a town where, in the morning, each is occupied with his business, I indulged my taste for poetry, and composed my epistle to the poets. For my amusement too I had the humourous-pleasantry that was then printing at Paris, against a man who deserved to be chastised for his insolence, and was so most severely; it was *Le Franc de Pompignan*.

With considerable literary fame in his province, and with little at Paris, yet with enough to be esteemed there, he might peaceably have enjoyed that esteem, if the excess of his vanity, of his presumption, and of his ambition, had not so much intoxicated him. Unfortunately too much flattered at his academies of Montauban and Toulouse, accustomed to hear himself applauded there as soon as he opened his lips, and even before he had spoken. Extolled in the journals, whose favour he contrived either to gain or to buy, he fancied himself a man of importance in literature; and unfortunately again, he had added to the arrogance of the lord of a parish, the pride of a president of the superior court in the town of Montauban; which altogether formed a most ridiculous personage. After the opinion he entertained of himself, he had thought it unjust that, at the first wish he had expressed of

being admitted to the French academy, they had not been eagerly desirous of receiving him there; and when, in 1758, Sainte-Palaye had been elected in preference to him, he had shewn a proud indignation at it. Two years afterward, the academy had not refused to grant him its suffrage; and in the unanimity of his election he might well have found grateful pleasure. But, instead of the modesty that even the greatest men affected, at least on entering there, he brought with him the sourness of offended pride, with an excess of affectation and arrogance that is inconceivable. The unhappy man had conceived the ambition of doing I know not what in the education of the princes of the blood. He knew that, in his principles of religion, the dauphin did not like Voltaire, and that he looked with displeasure on the labours of the *Encyclopédie*; he paid his court to that prince; he fancied he had recommended himself to his particular favour, by his sacred odes, the magnificent edition of which ruined his bookseller; he thought he had highly flattered him, by confiding to him the manuscript of his translation of the *Georgics*: he did not know to whom he was exposing his vanity; he did not know that this translation, so painfully laboured, in hard, rough, and hammered verse, without colour and without harmony, compared to the master-piece of Latin poetry, was, by the dauphin himself, submitted to the satirical eye of criticism, and turned into derision. He thought he had struck a death-blow, in attacking publicly, in the speech he made on entering the academy, that class of men of letters, who were called philosophers, and particularly Voltaire, and the *Encyclopédistes*.

He had just made this attack, when I set out for Bordeaux; and that which was scarcely less astonishing than his arrogance was the success it obtained. The academy had listened in silence to this insolent declamation; the public had applauded it; Pompidan had retired triumphant, and inflated with his vain glory.

But, a little while afterward, began against him the light skirmish of the *Facéties Parisiennes*; and it was one of his friends, the president Barbeau, who called and told me that *this poor M. de Pompidan was the laughing-stock of Paris*. He shewed me the first sheets that he had just received; they were the *when*, and the *wherefore*. I saw the turn and tone that the pleasantry took. "You are then the friend of M. Lefranc?" asked I.—"Alas! yes," said he to me.—"Then I pity you; for I know the banterers who are at his heels. You have here the *when* and the *wherefore*; and the *if*, the *but*, the *for*, will soon follow in their train; and I can announce to you, that they will not quit him till he has passed by all the parties." The correction was still more severe than I had foreseen; they played upon him on every string. He wanted to defend himself seriously; he became the more ridiculous. He addressed a memorial to the king; his memorial was treated with contempt. Voltaire appeared to grow young again, in order to amuse himself at his expense; in verse, in prose, his satire was lighter, more pointed, more fruitful, in original and comic ideas, than it had ever been. One sally did not wait the other. The public did not cease to laugh at the expense of the

sad Lefranc. Obligated to keep himself shut up at home, that he might not hear his song sung in society, nor see himself pointed at, he finished by going to bury himself in his country house, where he died, without ever daring to re-appear at the academy. I confess that I felt no pity for him, not only because he was the aggressor, but because his aggression was serious and grave, and would even have gone, had he been believed, to the proscription of many literary men, whom he denounced and proclaimed as the enemies of the throne and the altar.

When Gaulard and I were on the point of returning to Paris, "shall we again take the same road?" said he; "would not you prefer taking the tour by Toulouse, Montpellier, Nîmes, Avignon, Vaucluse, Aix, Marseilles, Toulon, Lyons, and Geneva? We should then see Voltaire, with whom my father was acquainted." You are very sure that I embraced this charming project with transport; and, before we set off, I wrote to Voltaire.

At Toulouse, we were received by an intimate friend of Madame Gaulard, M. de Saint-Amant; a man of the old time, for frankness and politeness, and who occupied a place of considerable importance in that city. As for me, I did not find there a single person whom I knew. I had even great difficulty in recognizing the city; so much to me did the objects of comparison, and the habit of seeing Paris, make it appear mean and diminutive.

From Toulouse to Béziers, we were occupied with following and observing the canal of Languedoc. This was truly to me an object of admiration, because I there saw grandeur and simplicity united; two characters that never shew themselves together, without causing astonishment.

The junction of the two seas, and the commerce from one to the other, were the result of two or three grand ideas combined by genius. The first was that of an immense mass of water, in the kind of cup formed by the mountains near Revel, a few leagues from Carcassonne, to be the perpetual source and reservoir of the canal. The second was the choice of an eminence, lower than the reservoir, but commanding on one side the space from that point to Toulouse, and on the other that from the same point to Béziers; so that the water of the reservoir, conducted thither by a natural slope, would there remain suspended in a vast level, and would only have to extend itself on one side toward Béziers, and on the other, toward Toulouse, to supply the canal, and to deposit the barks in the Orbe on one side, and on the other in the Garonne. Finally, a third and principal idea was the construction of the sluices at all the points where the barks would have to rise or descend; the effect of these sluices, being, as you know, to receive the barks, and by being filled or emptied at pleasure, to serve them as steps for the double purpose of descending or rising to the level of the canal.

In sparing you the details of foresight and of industry, into which the inventor entered, in order to render inexhaustible the source of the canal, and to measure the volume of its water, without ever making it depend on the course of neighbouring rivers, nor communicate with them, I will only say that I neglected none

of these details. But the principal object of my attention was the bason of Saint-Ferreol, the source of the canal, and the reservoir of its waters. This bason, formed, as I have said, by a circle of mountains, is two thousand, two hundred, and twenty-two fathoms in circumference, and one hundred and sixty feet in depth. The narrow pass of the mountains, that encompass it, is closed by a wall six and thirty fathoms thick. When it is full, its waters flow over in cascades; but in dry seasons these overflowings cease, and the water is then drawn from the bottom of the reservoir: the means employed for that purpose are these—

In the side of the mountain, two long vaults are constructed at the distance of forty feet from each other, which run under the reservoir. To one of these vaults, three brass tubes are vertically adapted, whose bore equals that of the largest cannon, and by which, when their cocks are opened, the water of the reservoir falls into an aqueduct constructed along the second vault; so that, when you penetrate to these tubes, you have one hundred and sixty feet of water above your head. We did not fail to advance thus far, by the glimmering light our conductor carried us in a chafing-dish; for no ordinary light could have sustained the commotion of the air that the explosion of the waters soon excited under the vault; when, suddenly, with a strong iron lever, our man turned the cock of one of the three tubes, then that of the second, and then that of the third. At the opening of the first, the most dreadful thunder echoed beneath the vault; and twice, peal on peal, this roar redoubled. I thought I saw the bottom of the reservoir burst, and the mountains around shake from their bases, and falling on our heads. The profound emotion, and, to speak the truth, the affright, this noise had created, did not prevent us from going to see what was passing under the second vault. We penetrated there, amid the sound of this subterraneous thunder; and we saw three torrents rush from the three tubes. I know of no motion in nature that can be compared to the violence of the column of water, that here escaped from the reservoir in floods of foam. The eye could not follow it; it could not be looked on without giddiness. The border of the aqueduct, in which this torrent flowed, was but four feet wide; it was covered with freestone, polished, wet, and very slippery. We there stood, pale and motionless; and if our feet had slipped, the water of the torrent would have rolled us a thousand paces in the twinkling of an eye. We returned shuddering; and we felt the rocks, which support the bason, tremble at the distance of a hundred paces.

Although quite familiar with the mechanism of the canal, I was again astonished, when, from the foot of the hill of Béziers, I saw, like a long stair-case, eight contiguous sluices, by which the barks rose or descended with equal facility.

At Béziers, I found one of my friends, M. de la Sablière, an old officer, who, after having long enjoyed the life of Paris, had come to pass the remnant of his days in his native city, and to enjoy there the consideration that he merited for his services. In the voluptuous asylum he had formed himself, he received us with that *gasconne* hilarity, which was animated yet more by the com-

forts of a genteel fortune, an independent and tranquil mind, a taste for reading, a little ancient philosophy, and the renowned salubrity of the air that is breathed at Béziers. He inquired for M. de la Poplinière, at whose house we had passed many charming days together. "Alas!" answered I, "I never see him now. His fatal egotism has made him forget friendship. I will confide a secret to you which I have told to no one."

"Immediately after the marriage of my sister, I had obtained for her husband a place in the snuff-office at Chinon; a simple, easy employment, that my sister might have preserved, had she lost her husband. This place was worth one hundred pounds. At the same time, La Poplinière had obtained for one of his relations the place of receiver in the custom-office at Saumur, which, though of infinite detail and extreme difficulty, produced but fifty pounds. La Poplinière intreated me to change with him, alledging conveniency, because his relation lived at Chinon. As he asked this service of me in the name of friendship, I did not hesitate to render it him. I even endeavoured to persuade myself that the talents of my brother-in-law would have been buried in a snuff-magazine; whereas, in a receiver's place, that required a man of information, vigilance, and application, he would be able to distinguish himself, and to deserve advancement. I thought then that I should do him no injury; and, generous at his expense, I was so to excess; for the place at Chinon being double the value of that at Saumur, La Poplinière offered me, for this exchange, an annual indemnity of fifty pounds; and I insisted on no other compensation than the pleasure of obliging him. Well, this little place, in which my brother-in-law had re-established order, activity, exactitude, and which they had allowed him to join to that of the salt-office, was solicited by another person, without my knowledge, and my brother-in-law lost it." "And did La Poplinière suffer it to be torn from you?" "What could he do?" "Why! bless me! was he without credit in his company? At least ought he not to have acknowledged and pleaded what you had done for him?" "What will you say, then," added I, "when I tell you, that he himself, without saying a word to me, has asked for, has solicited, this employment, for his secretary, and stolen it from the husband of my sister?" "That cannot be." "It is but too true: the farmer-generals themselves have told it me." La Sablière remained for some time in silent astonishment; and then—"My dear friend," said he, "you and I have both loved him: let us think but of that, and cast a veil over the rest." And indeed we did nothing but retrace those happy days, when La Poplinière was our engaging host, and that moving gallery of pictures and characters, that we had so often witnessed at his house. "I still love the memory of those days," said he, "but 'tis like a dream, from which I awake without regret."

Montpellier offered nothing interesting to us, but the botanic garden; and that again afforded us only an agreeable walk; for in botany we were both equally ignorant; but as we were connoisseurs in pretty women, we had the pleasure of following with our eyes some charming brunettes, who had an engaging air. What

distinguishes the women, here, is an animated look, an active walk, and an alluring eye. I particularly observed that they had delicate feet, which, in every country, is a happy presage.

At Nîmes, we expected, on the faith of travellers and artists, to be struck with admiration; but nothing surprised us. There are things whose grandeur and beauty have been so exaggerated by fame, that the idea we conceive of them at a distance, can but decrease when we behold them near. The amphitheatre did not appear vast to us, and its structure only astonished us by its massive heaviness. The square house gave us some pleasure, but it was the pleasure afforded by a small object, regularly constructed.

I must not forget that at Nîmes, in the cabinet of a naturalist, M. Segnier, we saw a collection of grey-coloured stones, which, broken in layers, like slate, present the two halves of an incrustated fish, whose form is very distinct; and this did not much surprise. But I beheld it with wonder, when this naturalist assured me that these stones are found on the Alps, and that the species of fish they enclose is not known in our seas.

Quærite, quos agitat mundi labor.

LUCAN.

We only saw Avignon as we passed through it, in our way to Vaucluse. But here again it was requisite to lower the idea we had formed of the enchanted residence of Petrarch and Laura. It is with Vaucluse as with Castalie, Penée and Simois. Their renown is due to the Muses; their true charm is in the verses that have celebrated them. It is not that the cascade of the fountain of Vaucluse is not beautiful, both for the volume and charming bounds of its waters among the rocks that break their fall. But the poets, who have described it, must allow me to say, that its source is absolutely destitute of the ornaments of nature; both sides of it are naked, barren, steep, without shade; it is only at the bottom of the cascade that the river, which it forms, begins to clothe its borders with smiling verdure. Yet, before we quitted the source of its waters, we seated ourselves, we meditated, and without speaking to each other, with our eyes fixed on the ruins, that seemed to us to be the remains of Petrarch's villa, we ourselves indulged for some moments in poetic fiction, and thought we beheld, wandering round these ruins, the shades of two lovers from whom the glory of Vaucluse is derived.

But what is more essentially formed to delight the eyes is the local position, and the exterior of a little town, that is embraced by the river of Vaucluse, and by which its walls are bathed; and this has given it the name of *L'Isle*. We fancied that we really beheld an enchanted island, as we walked around it, under two rows of mulberry trees, and between two canals of spring water, pure and rapid. Some pretty groups of young Jewesses, who were walking like ourselves, added to the illusion that the beauty of the place created; and some excellent trout, with some fine cray-fish, that were brought us for supper at the inn, which ter-

minated this charming walk, added the gratification of another sense, to the pleasures of the imagination and of the view.

The fine weather, that had so agreeably accompanied our journey since we left Paris, abandoned us on the confines of Provence. The country, where it so rarely rains, was rainy for us. The city of Aix was but a passage on our road to Marseilles and Toulon. Yet we were obliged to pay the customary visit to the governor of the province, who resided in that city. This governor, the unworthy son of Marshal Villars, received me with a politeness, that in any other would have flattered me. He insisted on keeping us till after the *Fête-Dieu*. We refused; but he made us promise that we would return to Aix the day before the fête, to see the procession of king René.

The commercial and maritime ports of Marseilles and Toulon were to me two objects of very lively interest, and very eager attention; and though, at Marseilles, a new city, most magnificently built, was worthy of occupying us, the little time we were there was wholly employed in visiting the port, its fortifications, its magazines, and all the great objects of that commerce, which the war almost annihilated; but which would again become flourishing in peace. At Toulon, the port was again the only object of our thoughts. We there recognized the hand of Lewis XIV, in the superb establishments that bore the print of his grandeur, and in which, both for the building and armament of vessels, all recalled the idea of a respectable power.

Here, what it should seem ought most to have imposed on me, was what astonished me least. One of my desires was to see the open sea. I saw it, but calm; and the pictures of Vernet had so faithfully represented it to me, that the reality caused me no emotion; my eyes were as accustomed to it as if I had been born on its shores.

The Duke de Villars had appeared desirous that we should witness the gala he intended to give at his house the day before the *Fête-Dieu*. We arrived there in the evening, and found all the best company of the city, a ball, card assembly, and supper. The next day, the bad weather deprived us of the sight of the procession, which they had represented to us as very brilliant. However, we saw some specimens of it: for instance, a drunken porter, representing the queen of Sheba; another, king Solomon, three others, the Magi, and all up to the ears in dirt. The queen of Sheba nevertheless jumped about in cadence, and king Solomon bounded after the queen of Sheba. I admired the gravity of the people of Provence at this sight, and we took great care to imitate this respect. However I had sometimes extreme difficulty in refraining from laughter. Among others, I remarked one of these personages, who carried a white rag at the end of a pole, and behind him three other dirty fellows, who made all kinds of drunken motions in the street, whenever the man with the white rag threw down his pole. I asked what was the mystery that this represented to us. "Don't you see," said the mayor, to whom I spoke, "that they are the three magi conducted



by the star, and who lose their way as soon as the star disappears." I contained myself. Nothing moderates the desire of laughing, like the fear of being stoned.

The governor insisted that we should not leave Aix the next day, till after we had dined with him. At this dinner, he made a point of assembling men of merit, M. de Monclar at their head. I had conceived the highest esteem for this great magistrate. I expressed it to him with that ingenuousness of sentiment, that has no resemblance to flattery. He appeared sensible of it, and returned it with kindness. Soon after we rose from table, I took leave of the Duke de Villars, as grateful as I could be, for the attentions and favours of a man whom I did not esteem.

On our road from Aix, to Lyon, there was nothing remarkable but a trait of honesty in the woman who kept the inn at Tain, a village near that *Côte de l'Hermitage*, so celebrated for its wines. At this village, while we were changing horses, I said to the hostess, giving her a louis d'or, "Madam, if you have any excellent red hermitage, give me six bottles of it, and pay yourself out of this louis." She looked at me with an air of satisfaction, pleased at the confidence I was willing to repose in her. "As for excellent red wine," said she to me, "I have none, but I have some white of the very best." I confided in her word, and this wine, for which she took only two shillings a bottle, proved to be nothing less than nectar.

Eager to get to Geneva, we did not give ourselves time to see Lyons; reserving for our return the pleasure of admiring the master-pieces of industry in that great workshop of luxury.

Nothing can be more singular, nor more original, than the reception Voltaire gave us. He was in bed when we arrived. He extended to us his arms, he wept for joy as he embraced me; he embraced the son of his old friend, M. Gaulard, with the same emotion. "You find me dying," said he; "do you come to restore me to life, or to receive my last sighs?" My companion was alarmed at this preface; but I, who had a hundred times heard Voltaire say he was dying, gave Gaulard a gentle sign of encouragement. And indeed, a moment afterward, the dying man making us sit down by his bed-side, "My dear friend," said he, "how happy I am to see you! particularly at the moment when I have a man with me whom you will be charmed to hear. It is M. de l'Ecluse, the surgeon-dentist of the late king of Poland, now the lord of an estate near Montargis, and who has been pleased to come to repair the irreparable teeth of Madame Denis. He is a charming man: but don't you know him?"—"The only l'Ecluse that I know," answered I, "is an actor of the old comic-opera-house."—" 'Tis he, my friend, 'tis he himself. If you know him, you have heard the song of the *Grinder*, that he plays and sings so well." And there was Voltaire instantly imitating l'Ecluse, and, with his bare arms and sepulchral voice, playing the *Grinder*, and singing the song:

Oh! where can I put her?  
 My sweet little girl!  
 Oh! where can I put her?  
 They'll steal her and..... ..

We were bursting with laughter; and he quite serious: "I imitate him very ill," said he; "'tis l'Ecluse that you must hear, and his song of the *Spinner*! and that of the *Postilion*! and the quarrel of the *Apple-women with Vaddé*! 'tis truth itself. Oh! you will be delighted. Go and speak to Madame Denis. I, ill as I am, will get up to dine with you. We'll eat some wild fowl, and we'll listen to M. de l'Ecluse. The pleasure of seeing you has suspended my ills, and I feel myself quite revived."

Madame Denis received us with that cordiality which constituted the charm of her character. She introduced M. de l'Ecluse to us; and at dinner Voltaire engaged him, by the most flattering praises, to afford us the pleasure of hearing him. He displayed all his talents; and we appeared charmed with them. It was very requisite: for Voltaire would not have pardoned us a feeble applause.

The walk, in his gardens, was employed in speaking of Paris, the *Mercure*, the bastille (of which I only said one word) of the theatre, the *Encyclopédie*, and of that unhappy Le Franc, whom he still continued to tease. His physician having ordered him, as he said, for exercise, to hunt Le Pompignan every morning for an hour or two. He charged me to assure our friends that they should every day receive from him some new pleasantry. He was faithful to his promise.

When we returned from our walk, he played a game or two of chess with M. Gaulard, who, respectfully, let him win. Afterward, he again spoke of the theatre, and of the revolution which Mademoiselle Clairon had introduced there. "Is, then, the change that has taken place in her somewhat prodigious?" said he. "It is," I replied, "a new talent; it is the perfection of art; or rather, it is nature herself, such as your imagination can paint her in her greatest beauty." Then exalting my fancy and my language to make him understand to what point, in the different characters she played, she was with truth, and with sublime truth, Camille, Roxane, Hermione, Ariane, and above all Electre, I exhausted the little eloquence I had to inspire in him that enthusiasm for Clairon with which I was filled; and I enjoyed, while I spoke, the emotion to which I gave birth. At last addressing himself to me: "Well! my dear friend," said he, with transport, "'tis just like Madame Denis; she has made astonishing, incredible progress. I wish you could see her play Zaire, Alzire, Idamé! talent can go no further." Madame Denis playing Zaire! Madame Denis compared to Clairon! I was thunder-struck: so true it is that taste accommodates itself to the object it can enjoy; and that this wise maxim,

When we have not what we love,  
 We must love what we have,

is indeed not only a lesson of nature, but a means she husbands to procure us pleasures.

We returned to walk, and while M. de Voltaire was talking to M. Gaulard of his ancient friendship for the father of this young man, I, on my side, was conversing to Madame Denis, and recalling the good time to her memory.

In the evening, I put Voltaire on the chapter of the king of Prussia. He spoke of him with a kind of cold magnanimity, like a man who disdained a too easy revenge, or as an undeceived lover pardons the mistress he has left, the rage and indignation she has excited in him.

At supper, the conversation turned on the men of letters he most esteemed; and in the number it was easy for me to distinguish those he loved from the bottom of his heart. They were not those who most boasted of being in favour with him. Before he went to bed, he read to us two new cantos of *La Pucelle*, and Madame Denis bade us observe that, since he had been at *Delices*, it was the only day he had passed without retiring to his closet.

The next day, we had the discretion to leave him at least a part of his morning, and we sent him word that we should wait till he rang. He was visible about eleven. He was still in his bed. "Young man," said he, "I hope you have not renounced poetry: let us see some of your new productions; I tell you all I know; each should have his turn."

More intimidated before him than I had ever been, whether it were that I had lost the ingenuous confidence of early youth, or that I felt more intimately than ever how difficult it is to write good verses, I resolved with difficulty to recite to him my epistle to the poets: he was highly pleased with it. He asked me if it were known at Paris. I answered, that it was not. "Then," said he, "you must send it to the academy; it will make some noise there." I represented to him that I had allowed myself a licence of opinion in it, at which many would be alarmed. "I know," returned he, "an honourable lady who confessed that one day, after having proudly reproved impudence, these tender words had escaped her: charming impudent creature! The academy will do the same."

Before dinner, he took me to make some visits at Geneva; and, talking of the way in which he lived with the inhabitants, "it is very grateful," said he, "to live in a country where its sovereigns send to ask you for your carriage, that they may come and dine with you."

His house was open to them; they passed whole days there; and as the gates of the city were shut at the close of day, not to open till the morning rose, those who supped at his house were obliged to sleep there, or at the country houses that cover the borders of the lake.

On our way, I asked him how, almost without territory, and without any facility of commerce with foreign countries, Geneva had enriched itself. "In manufacturing watches," he replied, "in reading your gazettes, and profiting by your follies. These people here know how to calculate the profits on your loans."

As we were talking of Geneva, he asked me what I thought of Rousseau. I answered that, in his writings, he appeared to me only an eloquent sophist; and, in his character, only a false cynick, who would burst with pride and indignation if the world ceased to look at him. As to the earnest desire he had conceived of giving a fair exterior to the part he acted, I knew the anecdote, and I told it to him.

In one of the letters of Rousseau to M. de Malesherbes, you have seen in what a transport of inspiration and enthusiasm he had conceived the project of declaring himself against the arts and sciences. "I was going," says he, in the recital he has made of this miracle, "I was going to see Diderot, then a prisoner at Vincennes; I had in my pocket a *Mercur de France*, which I turned over as I went along. I fell on the question of the Dijon academy, which has given rise to my first work. If any thing ever resembled sudden inspiration, it was the emotion that this question excited in me. Suddenly, my mind was dazzled with a thousand lights; crowds of vivid ideas pressed on me at once, with a force and a confusion that threw me into inexpressible disorder. I felt my head seized with a giddiness that resembled intoxication. A violent palpitation oppressed me, and agitated my bosom. No longer able to breathe as I walked, I fell at the foot of one of the trees of the avenue, and I there passed half an hour in such an agitation, that, on rising, I perceived all the front of my waistcoat wet with my tears, without having been sensible that I had shed any."

You have here an emotion eloquently described. I will now tell you the fact, in its simplicity, such as Diderot related it to me, and such as I related it to Voltaire.

"I was" ('tis Diderot who speaks) "I was a prisoner at Vincennes; Rousseau came to see me there. He has made me his Aristarchus, as he has said himself. One day, as we were walking together, he told me that the Dijon academy had just proposed an interesting question, and that he was desirous of treating it. This question was: *Has the re-establishment of arts and sciences contributed to the improvement of morals?* Which side will you take?" asked I. "The affirmative," answered he. "'Tis the asses' bridge," said I; "all ordinary talents will take that road; and you will find there only common ideas; whereas the contrary side presents a new, rich, and fertile field for philosophy and for eloquence." "You are right," returned he, after a moment's reflection; "and I'll take your advice." Thus, from that moment, added I, his part and his mask were decided.

"You do not astonish me," said Voltaire; "that man is factitious from head to foot: he is so in his mind and in his soul. But it is in vain for him to play now the stoic and now the cynic; he will eternally belie himself, and his mask will stifle him."

Among the inhabitants of Geneva, that I saw at his house, the only men who pleased me and who were pleased with me, were the Chevalier Hubert, and Cramer, the bookseller. They were both of easy converse, of a jovial temper, with wit without affectation, a rare thing in their city. Cramer, I was told, played tra-

gedy tolerably well; he was the Orosmane of Madame Denis, and this talent had gained him the friendship and the custom of Voltaire, that is to say, thousands. Hubert had a talent less useful, but amusing and very curious in its futility. You would have said he had eyes at his fingers' ends. With his hands behind his back, he would cut out a portrait in profile with a more perfect resemblance than he could have drawn it with a pencil. He had Voltaire's face so strongly impressed on his imagination, that, absent or present, his scissars represented him meditating, writing, in action, and in all attitudes. I have seen landscapes cut out by him in white paper, where the perspective was preserved with prodigious art. These two amiable neighbours were very assiduous in their visits to *Les Delices*, during the little time I staid there.

M. de Voltaire insisted on shewing us his country-house at Tornay, where his theatre was, a quarter of a league from Geneva. This was the end of our ride in the afternoon in his carriage. Tornay was a little neglected country seat; but the view from it was admirable. In the valley, the lake of Geneva, bordered with country houses, and terminated by two large cities; beyond, and in the distance, a chain of mountains, of thirty leagues of extent, and Mont-blanc loaded with eternal snows and ice, that never melt, is the view that Tornay offers. There I saw the little theatre that tormented Rousseau, and where Voltaire consoled himself for no longer visiting the theatre of Paris, which nightly resounded his fame. The idea of this unjust and tyrannical privation filled me with grief and indignation. Perhaps he perceived it; for more than once, by his reflections, he answered my thoughts; and on the road, as we returned, he talked to me of Versailles, of the long residence I had made there, and of the kindness that Madame de Pompadour had formerly expressed for him. "She still loves you," said I; "she has repeated it often to me. But she is weak, and dares not, or cannot, effect all she wishes; for the unhappy woman is no longer loved; and perhaps she now envies the lot of Madame Denis, and would willingly be at *Les Delices*." "Let her come," said he, with transport, "and play tragedy with us. I will write characters for her, and characters of queens. She is beautiful; she should know the play of the passions."—"She knows too," said I to him, "the torments of profound grief and bitter tears." "So much the better! that is just what we want," exclaimed he, as it were enchanted at having a new actress. And in truth you would have said that he thought he saw her arrive. "Since she suits you," said I, "leave the rest to me: if she can no longer succeed on the theatre of Versailles, I will tell her that yours awaits her."

This romantic fiction amused the company. They found some probability in it: and Madame Denis, indulging the illusion, already entreated her uncle not to oblige her to yield her parts to the new actress. He retired to his closet for a few hours; and in the evening, at supper, kings and their mistresses being the subject of our conversation, Voltaire, in comparing the spirit and gallantry of the old and new courts, displayed to us that rich me-

mony which nothing interesting ever escaped. From Madame de Vallière to Madame de Pompadour, the anecdotic history of the two reigns, and in the interval that of the regency, passed in review with a rapidity and a brilliancy of beauty and colouring that dazzled us. Yet he reproached himself with having stolen from M. de l'Ecluse moments which, he said, he would have occupied more agreeably for us. He begged him to indemnify us by a few scenes of the *Apple-woman*; and he laughed at them like a child.

The next day (it was the last we were to pass together) he sent for me early in the morning, and giving me a manuscript: "Go into my closet," said he, "and read that; you shall give me your opinion of it." It was the tragedy of *Tancrède*, that he had just finished. I read it, and returning with my face bathed in tears, I told him he had never written any thing more interesting. "To whom," asked he, "would you give the part of Aménaiide?" "To Clairon," answered I, "to the sublime Clairon; and I will answer for a success at least equal to that of Zaire." "Your tears," replied he, "tell me most eloquently what I was most desirous of knowing; but the action, did you find nothing that stopped you in its march?" "I found that it only wants what you call criticisms of the closet. The public will be too much moved to be occupied with them at the theatre." Fortunately, he said nothing of the style; I should have been obliged to conceal my sentiments, for, in my opinion, *Tancrède*, in point of style, was very far from being written like his best tragedies. In *Rome Sauvée*, and in *l'Orphelin de la Chine*, I had still found the beautiful versification of *Zaire*, of *Merope*, and of *le Mort de César*; but in *Tancrède* I thought I saw a decline in his style, weak, tedious verses, loaded with redundant words, that disguise the want of force and vigour; in a word, the age of the poet; for in him, as in Corneille, the poetry of style was the first that declined, and after *Tancrède*, where that fire of genius still threw out some sparks, it was wholly extinguished.

Afflicted at our departure, he would not steal from us one moment of this last day. The desire of seeing me received at the French academy, the eulogy of my Tales, which formed, he said, their most agreeable reading, then my analysis of Rousseau's letter to d'Alembert on the stage, a refutation which he thought unanswerable, and which he appeared to esteem very highly, were, during our walk, the subjects of his conversation. I asked him whether Geneva had been deceived on the true motive of this letter of Rousseau. "Rousseau," said he, "is better known at Geneva than at Paris. We are here neither the dupes of his false zeal nor of his false eloquence. It is against me that his darts are directed; and that is obvious to every one. Possessed of unbounded pride, he would wish that, in his native country, no one should occupy any place in the public mind but himself. My residence here eclipses him; he envies me the air I breathe here; and, above all, he cannot suffer that, by amusing Geneva sometimes, I should steal moments that might be employed in thinking of him."

As we were to set off at the dawn of day, as soon as the gates of the city were open, and we could get horses, we resolved, with Madame Denis, M. Hubert, and M. Cramer, to prolong till that hour the pleasure of sitting up and conversing together. Voltaire would be of the party; and we pressed him in vain to retire to bed. More awake than ourselves, he read to us some cantos of the poem of *Jeanne*. This reading had for me an inexpressible charm; for if Voltaire, in reciting heroic verses, affected, in my mind, an emphasis too monotonous, a cadence too strongly marked, no one read familiar and comic verses with so much naturalness, delicacy, and grace: his eyes and his smile had an expression that I have never seen but in him. Alas! it was for me the song of the swan, and I was only to see him again to witness his death.

Our mutual adieus were tender even to tears; but much more so on my part than on his: that was natural; for, independently of my gratitude, and all the motives I had for loving him, I left him in exile.

At Lyons, we gave one day to the family of Fleurieu, who expected me at La Tourette, their country house. The two following days were employed in seeing the city; and, from the spinning house of gold and silk, to the perfection of the richest tissues, we rapidly followed all the operations of art that formed the riches of that flourishing city. The manufactories, the town-hall, the beautiful hospital of *La Charité*, the library of the Jesuits, the convent of the Chartreux, and the theatre, divided our attention.

Here, I recollect that as I passed, on my way to Geneva, Mademoiselle Destouche, the directress of the theatre, had sent to me, to ask which of my tragedies I should wish to see played on my return. I sensibly felt this civility; but I merely returned her my thanks, and requested her, on my return, to gratify me with that tragedy of Voltaire which her performers played best. They gave *Alzire*.

While my epicurean philosophy was enjoying itself in the provinces, the hatred of my enemies did not sleep at Paris. I learnt, on arriving there, that D'Argental and his wife were spreading the report that I was lost in the king's esteem; and that it would be in vain for the academy to elect me; because his majesty would not confirm my election. I found my friends struck with this opinion; and, had I been as impatient to be of the academy as they were to see me there, I should have been very unhappy. But, while assuring them that, in spite of intrigue, I should obtain this place, from which my enemies were so desirous to exclude me, I also declared that my pride would be well satisfied if I deserved it, even without obtaining it. I applied myself, therefore, to finish my translation of *Pharsalia*, and my *Poétique Française*; I sent my *Épître aux Poètes* to the academy; and, as the editions of my *Tales* succeeded each other, I added new ones.

The success of the *Epistle to the Poets* was such as Voltaire had predicted; but it was not without difficulty that it bore the prize, in preference to two excellent works that disputed it: one was Thomas's *Epistle to the People*; the other, Delille's *Epistle on*

*the Advantages of Retirement for Men of Letters.* This circumstance of my life was remarkable enough to occupy us a moment.

I had scarcely sent my epistle to the academy, when Thomas, according to his custom, came to shew me that which he was about to send. I thought it beautiful; and of so noble and firm a kind, that I believed it at least very possible that it would be preferred to mine. "My dear friend," said I, after having read and warmly applauded it, "I have a secret to confide to you in my turn; but, on two conditions: one, that you will observe the most absolute secrecy; the other, that, after having learnt what I am going to tell you, you will make no use of it; that is, that you will act just as if I had not told it you. Give me your promise." He gave it me. "Now," continued I, "I will inform you that I have sent an epistle to the academy." "In that case," said he to me, "I withdraw mine." "That is what I cannot consent to," replied I; "and for two reasons: one, because it is very possible that my work may be rejected as heretical, and that the prize may be refused it; you shall judge of it yourself; the other, because it is not decided that my epistle is preferable to yours, and that I will not steal from you a prize that, perhaps, belongs to you. I therefore rely on the promise you have given me. Here's my epistle." I read it to him: and he agreed that there were bold and dangerous passages in it. Here, then, we were confidential rivals of each other, and competitors with the Abbé Delille.

One day, when the academy were sitting in judgment on the rival epistles, in order to determine the prize, I met Duclos at the opera, and asked him whether it was decided. "Don't mention it," said he; "I believe this competition will set fire to the academy. Three pieces, such as are rarely seen, dispute the prize. There are two, the merit of which is not doubtful; on that all are agreed; but the third turns our heads. It is the work of a young madman, full of fire and boldness, who respects nothing, who braves all literary prejudices, who speaks of poets like a poet, and who paints them in all their proper colours, with complete frankness; dares to praise Lucan, and censure Virgil, revenges Tasso for the contempt of Boileau, appreciates Boileau himself, and reduces him to his just value. D'Olivet is furious at it: he says that the academy dishonours itself, if it crowns that insolent work; and yet I am persuaded that it will be crowned." It was so. But when I presented myself to receive the prize, d'Olivet swore that he never would forgive me, so long as he lived.

It was, I think, at this time that I published my translation of the *Pharsalia*: from that moment rhetoric and poetry divided my studies; and my tales, at intervals, stole a few moments from them.

It was particularly in the country that this kind of meditation was favourable to me; and chance sometimes presented me with happy subjects. For example, one evening at Besons, where M. de Saint Florentin had a country house, being at supper with him, and the conversation turning on my tales: "There has happened," said he, "in this village, an adventure of which you could per-



Haps make something interesting." And, in few words, he related to me, that a young peasant and his lass, cousins-german, being in love with each other, the girl had proved with child; that, as neither the rector nor the judge of the bishop's court would marry them, they had had recourse to him, and that he had been obliged to procure a dispensation from Rome. I agreed that indeed this subject, well developed, might have its interest. At night, when I was alone, it recurred to my fancy, and seized so forcibly on my mind, that, in an hour, all the pictures, all the scenes, and the characters themselves, such as I have painted them, were designed, and, as it were, present to my view. At that time, the style of this kind of composition cost me no labour; it flowed as from its source; and, when the tale was once well conceived in my head, it was written. Instead of sleeping, I meditated all night on this. I saw, I heard *Annette* and *Lubin* as distinctly as if this fiction had been the fresh recollection of an event I had just witnessed. On rising at day-break, I had only to commit rapidly to paper what I had meditated; and my tale was made such as it is printed.

After dinner, before our walk, I was asked, as I often was in the country, whether I had not something to read; and I read *Annette* and *Lubin*. I cannot express the surprise of the whole company, and particularly the joy of M. de Saint Florentin, at seeing in how short a time I had painted the picture of which he had given me the outline. He wanted to send for the real *Annette* and *Lubin*. I entreated him to excuse my seeing them in reality. However, at one of the representations of the comic opera that was taken from this tale, the *Annette* and the *Lubin* of Besons were invited to come and see themselves on the stage. They were present at this performance in a box that was lent them, and they were very much applauded.

My imagination, directed to this species of fiction, was, to me, in the country, a kind of enchantress, who, from the moment I was alone, encompassed me with her witchcraft; sometimes at Malmaison, on the border of that rivulet which, by a rapid slope, rolls from the summit of the hill, and, winding under green bowers, goes to revive the verdure of the flowery lawn; sometimes at Croix-Fontaine, on those banks that the Seine waters, in describing an immense semicircle, as it were to please the eye; then again in those beautiful alleys of Saint-Assise, or on that long terrace that commands the Seine, and from whence the eye measures in the distance its majestic bed and its tranquil course.

At these country seats, my friends had the kindness of appearing to desire my company, to welcome me with joy, never thinking the days that we passed there were tedious, and never seeing me go away without expressing some regret. For my own part, I would willingly have been able to unite all my societies together, or to multiply myself, that I might quit none of them. They had no resemblance to each other; but each had for me its pleasures and its charms.

Malmaison then belonged to M. Desfourniels: the society was that of Madame Harenc; and I have sufficiently described the

close ties of friendship, and of gratitude, that there engaged my heart. The woman to whom I have been most dear, my mother excepted, was Madame Harenc. She appeared to have inspired all her friends with the tender interest she took in me. To love and be loved, in this intimate society, was my habitual life.

At Saint-Assise, at the house of Madame de Montulé, friendship was not without reserve, nor without distrust; I was young, and young women thought they ought to be circumspect with me. On my part, I had with them only a measured liberty, that was respectfully timid. But, in this constraint itself there was something very delicate, and very charming. Beside, the life of rule and agreeable application, that was led at Saint-Assise, suited my taste. A father and a mother, constantly occupied with rendering instruction easy and attractive to their children; the former making for them, with his own hand, that curious extract from the *Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences*, of which I preserved a copy; the latter abridging and reducing Buffon's *Natural History* to what might be read by them without danger, and with propriety; a governess for the two daughters, teaching them history, geography, arithmetic, Italian, and, still more carefully, the rules of the French language, by exercising them every day in writing correctly; in the afternoon, the brush in the hand of Madame de Montulé, and pencils in those of her daughters and their governess; and this occupation animated by gay remarks or by agreeable reading, serving them for recreation: in our walk, M. de Montulé exciting and directing the curiosity of his children to the knowledge of trees and plants, of which he formed for them a kind of herbal, where the nature, properties, and use of these vegetables were explained: finally, in our games themselves, ingenious artifices and continual excitements to emulation, to render pleasure profitable, by insinuating information even into their amusements. Such was for me the picture of this domestic school, where study never had the air of constraint, nor teaching the air of severity.

You may conceive that a father and a mother, who so well instructed their children, had themselves cultivated minds. M. de Montulé did not study to be engaging; that was the least of his cares; but Madame de Montulé had, in her mind and disposition, that grain of genteel coquetry, which, mixed with decorum, gives to the agreeable qualities of a woman more vivacity, brilliancy, and charm. She used to call me philosopher, well persuaded that I scarcely deserved that title; and to laugh at my philosophy was one of her pastimes. I perceived it; but it was a pleasure of which I would not deprive her.

With more cordiality, the good and all-simple Madame de Chalut attracted me to Saint-Cloud; and to keep me there she had an irresistible charm, that of a friendship, which, from the bottom of her heart, poured into mine, without reserve, its most secret cares, its most intimate feelings, and its dearest interests. She was not necessary to my happiness, I must confess it; but I was necessary to hers. Her soul needed the support of mine; it reposed on mine; and there it forgot its sorrows and its griefs.

She had one sorrow which words cannot express the horror of. It was that of seeing those she had lately served, her patrons, her benefactors, her friends, the dauphin, the dauphiness, struck at the same time, as by an invisible hand, and consumed, by what she called a slow poison, languish, wither, and die. It was I who soothed her sorrows at this slow death. She mixed them with some confidential communications, which she made only to me; and the secret shall follow me to the silence of the tomb.

But, of the country houses at which I successively passed the gay seasons of the year, Maisons and Croix-Fontaine were those that had the most charm for me. My visits at Croix-Fontaine were short; but all the voluptuousness of luxury, all the refinements of the most ingenious and delicate gallantry, were united there by the enchanter, Louret. He was acknowledged to be the most obliging and most magnificent of men: the grace with which he conferred his obligations was proverbial. Alas! you will soon see into what an abyss of misery this engaging and fatal passion led him. At the same time, as he held two important financial places, that of farmer-general, and that of farmer of the posts, as he had beside, by his correspondents and his courtiers, every facility of procuring himself, for his table, whatever was most exquisite and most rare in the kingdom; as he received from every side presents from those he patronised, or whose fortune he had made, his friends saw in his profusion only the effects of his credit, and the use of his riches.

But Madame Gaulard, who probably saw better and farther into the affairs of her friend than we, and who was afflicted at the profusion in which he lavished his fortune, determining to be no longer either the cause or the pretext for them, had taken, at Maisons, on the road to Croix-Fontaine, a simple, plain house, where she lived habitually solitary, with a niece of a lovely disposition, and the gaiety of fifteen. I have painted the character of Madame Gaulard in one of the tales of *La Veillée*, where I have introduced myself under the name of Ariste. Her disposition, so mild, so natural, and of so peaceful an equality, harmonized so readily with mine, that she had scarcely known me at Paris, and at Croix-Fontaine, when she chose me for her intimate companion in her retreat at Maisons; and I insensibly found myself so happy there, that I, at last, not only passed the summer months with her, but whole winters, when she preferred the silence and tranquillity of the country to the noise and tumult of the town. What a charm had this solitude for me! You suspect it; and I would tell it without mystery; for nothing was more legitimate than my intentions and my views. But as they did not succeed, they are but as one of those dreams, the remembrance of which has nothing interesting, except to him that has dreamed them. It suffices to know that this quiet retreat was that in which my days glided on with most calm and rapidity.

While I thus forgot the world, the academy, and myself, my friends, who thought literary honours usurped by all those who obtained them before me, were indignant at seeing in one single year four new academicians pass over my head, without my being

moved at it; while, at every new election, my enemies, besieging the doors of the academy, redoubled their manœuvres and their efforts to keep me from it.

In speaking of the parody of Cinna, I have forgotten to say that there was a severe word in it for the Count de Choiseul-Praslin, then ambassador at Vienna. You know that Augustus says to Cinna and Maximus,

You who serve me instead of Agrippa and Mecenas.

This line was thus parodied :

You who serve me instead of the Blackbird and my wife.

Now this name of *the Blackbird* was a nick-name given to the Count de Praslin, on the following account : when he had taken La Dangeville for his mistress, Grandval, who had been her favourite, and whom she wished to preserve as an auxiliary, answered her :

The black-bird has sullied that cage  
Which the sparrow will enter no more.

This verse of the parody had, therefore, been represented to the Duke de Choiseul as another crime; and in one of our conferences, he quoted it to me as an insult offered to his cousin. I had the weakness to answer that this line was not among those I had known. "And what, then, was the line you knew?" said he.—I answered, to rid myself of my embarrassment,

"You who serve me instead of a blackbird and wife."

—"Oh!" exclaimed he, "that line is flat; the other is much better! there is no comparison." Praslin was not a man to take a joke so gaily. He had a low and melancholy soul; and in men of that character, wounded pride is inexorable.

On his return from his embassy, he was made minister of state for foreign affairs. Then, like a profound politician, he consulted with D'Argental and his wife on the means of preventing, at least for some time to come, my admission to the academy.

Thomas bore away the prizes of eloquence there, with a great superiority over all his rivals. They resolved to oppose him to me; and for that purpose, the Count de Praslin began by taking him as his secretary, and by procuring him the place of secretary interpreter to the Swiss republic. This was giving to himself the honourable appearance of patronizing a man of merit. Thus the littleness of the revenge he was exerting against me was thought to be adorned and ennobled; and they only waited the moment to put Thomas forward, in order to bar my way to the academy.

In the mean time my friends and I, while we rejoiced at Thomas's good fortune, thought only of removing the obstacle that,

in the opinion of the academicians, opposed my election. "So long as they shall believe," said D'Alembert to me, "that the king would refuse you, they will not dare to elect you. D'Argental, Praslin, the Duke d'Aumont, assure us that we should experience this refusal. We must absolutely destroy this idea.

Restored to the good graces of Madame de Pompadour, I communicated my fears to her, entreating her to learn from the king whether he would be favourable to me. She had the kindness to ask him; and his answer was, that if I were elected, he would confirm my election. "May I then, madam," said I, "assure the academy of it?"—"No," replied she, "no, you would compromise me; you must only say that you have reason to hope for the king's approval."—"But, madam," insisted I, "if the king has formally said to you....."—"I know what the king has said to me," replied she with vivacity; "but do I know what those about him may make him say." These words silenced me; and I returned to vex D'Alembert with the account of what had just passed.

After having inveighed bitterly against all feeble souls, it was decided between us that I should only announce hope, but in such a tone as plainly to indicate that it was well founded: and, in effect, the death of Marivaux, in 1753, leaving a vacant place, I made the usual visits, with the air of a man who had nothing to fear from the court. At the same time, the inquietude of Madame de Pompadour on the influence courtiers might have in directing the king's decision, disturbed me; I laboured to imagine some means of assuring myself of his favour: I thought I discovered one; but at that moment I could not employ it. My *Poétique* was in the press; but some months would still elapse before it could be published: and it was the instrument of the design I had formed. Fortunately, the Abbé de Radouvilliers, formerly under-teacher to the French princes, presented himself at the same time with me, as a candidate for this vacant place; and it was doing something agreeable to the dauphin, and perhaps to the king himself, to resign it to him. I therefore went to Versailles, to declare to my competitor that I withdrew from the contest. I had but little merit in it; for he would have carried it against me; and such was his modesty, that he was sensible to this deference, as if he had owed to me alone all the suffrages united in his favour. A very remarkable circumstance, at this election, was the artifice employed by my enemies, and by those of D'Alembert and Duclos, to render us odious to the court of the dauphin. They had begun by spreading the report that my party would be averse to the Abbé de Radouvilliers, and that if, on the first scrutiny, he obtained the majority, at least on the second he would not escape the affront of some black balls. This prediction being made, the question was how to verify it; and they attempted it thus. There were at the academy four men distinguished by the name of philosophers; an odious title at that time. These noted academicians were, Duclos, D'Alembert, Saurin, and Watelet. The worthy chiefs of the opposite party, D'Olivet, Batteux, and probably Paulini and Ségner, formed a

plot to give four black balls, which would most assuredly be attributed to the philosophers; and indeed four black balls were found on the scrutiny.

Great astonishment, great murmurs, on the part of those who had given them; and with their eyes fixed on the four on whom the suspicion rested, the impostors said loudly, that it was very strange that a man so faultless and so estimable as the Abbé de Radouwilliers should experience the affront of four black balls! The Abbé d'Olivet was indignant at so shameful, so public a scandal; the four philosophers looked confounded. But the chances quickly turned in their favour, and to the shame of their enemies. The unexpected stroke was this: the custom of the academy, on beginning the ballot, was to distribute to each of the electors two balls, one black and one white. The box into which they fell had likewise two capsules, and two cups above, one white and the other black. When you would vote in favour of the candidate, you put the white ball into the white cup, the black ball into the black cup; and when you would vote against him, you put the white ball into the black cup, and the black ball into the white cup. Thus, on examining the balls, the whole number should be found, and as many white in the black capsule, as there were black in the white capsule.

Now, by a species of divination, one of the philosophers, Duclos, having foreseen the trick that their enemies were about to play them, had said to his comrades, "Let us keep our black balls in our hands, so that, if those knaves have the malice to give any, we may be able to produce the proof that the black balls do not come from us."

As soon as they had suffered D'Olivet and the other impostors to burst out into murmurs against the malevolent—"It is not I," said Duclos, opening his hand, "who have given a black ball; for I have fortunately kept mine, and there it is." "Nor is it I," said D'Alembert, "here's mine." Watelet and Saurin said the same in shewing theirs. At this sudden blow, the confusion was reflected back on the authors of the artifice. D'Olivet had the simplicity to think it unfair to have parried the blow by keeping back the black balls, alleging the laws of the academy, on the inviolable secrecy of the ballot. "Mr. Abbé," said D'Alembert to him, "the first of laws is that of personal defence; and we had only this method of arming ourselves against the suspicion with which you have chosen to attack us."

This trait of foresight, on the part of Duclos, became current in society, and the D'Olivets, caught in their own trap, were the jest of the court.

At length, the printing of my *Poétique* being completed, I entreated Madame de Pompadour to request the king to suffer a work that was wanting in our literature to be presented to him. "It is," said I to her, "a favour which will cost nothing either to the king or the state, and which will prove that I am well liked and well received by the king." I owe this testimony to the memory of this beneficent woman, that, at this simple and easy method of publicly deciding the king in my favour, her beautiful

countenance beamed with joy. "Most willingly," said she, "will I ask for you this favour of the king; and it will be granted." She obtained it without difficulty, and, in announcing it to me, "You must give," said she, "all possible solemnity to this presentation; and, on the same day, all the royal family, and all the ministers, must receive your work from your own hand."

I confided my secret only to my intimate friends; and my copies being very magnificently bound (for I spared no expense in it) I went one Saturday evening to Versailles with my packets. On arriving, I entreated Madame de Pompadour, through Quesnal, to engage the king to receive me well.

The next day I was introduced by the Duke de Duras. The king was at his levee. I had never seen him so engaging. He received my homage with an enchanting look. I should have been at the summit of joy if he had said one word to me; but his eyes spoke for him. The dauphin, whom the Abbé de Radouviillers had predisposed in my favour, had the kindness to speak to me. "I have heard much in praise of this work," said he to me; "I think highly of its author." As he pronounced these words, he penetrated my heart with grief; for I saw death on his countenance, and in his eyes.

In all this ceremony, the good Duke de Duras was my conductor; and I cannot describe what pains he took to have me well received.

When I went down to Madame de Pompadour, to whom I had already presented my work, "Go to M. de Choiseul's," said she, "and offer him his copy; he will receive you well; and leave me that of M. de Praslin; I will offer it him myself."

After this business was over, I hastened back to D'Alembert and Duclos, to announce to them the success I had just had; and the next day I made a present of my book to the academy. I distributed some copies of it to those academicians whose sentiments I knew to be favourable to me. Mairan said that this work was a mine that I had laid under the door of the academy, in order to blow it up, if it were shut to me; but all the difficulties were not yet smoothed.

Duclos and D'Alembert had had some strange altercation in full academy, on the subject of the king of Prussia, and of Cardinal De Bernis. They had so violently fallen out, that they no longer spoke to each other; and at the moment when I was about to need their harmony and good intelligence, I found them enemies to each other. Duclos, the most hasty of the two, but the least lively, was likewise the least offended. The enmity of such a man as D'Alembert was painful to him; he wished only to be reconciled with him; but he wanted that I should engage D'Alembert to make the first advances.

"I am indignant," said he, "at the oppression under which you have groaned, and at the secret and sordid persecution you still experience. It is time that it should finish. Bougainville is dying; you must have his place. Tell D'Alembert that I desire nothing more than to secure it to you; let him speak to me about

it at the academy: we'll arrange this business for the next election."

D'Alembert stamped with rage, when I proposed to him to speak to Duclos. "Let him go to the devil," answered he, "with his Abbé de Bernis: I will no more have to do with the one than the other."—"In that case, I give up the academy; my only regret," said I, "is that I ever thought of it."—"Why so?" replied he, with warmth; "do you want Duclos, in order to gain your point?"—"And who should I not want, when my friends abandon me, and when my enemies are more eager to injure me, and more active than ever? Alas! they would commune with the devil, to deprive me of a single vote; but what I have formerly said in verse, I experience myself:

Friendship desponds, misfortune freezes her;  
Hatred's implacable, and never tires."

"You shall be of the academy, in spite of your enemies," replied he. "No, sir, no, I shall not be of it; I will not be of it. I shall be played the fool with, supplanted, insulted by a party already too numerous and too strong. I prefer living in obscurity; for that, thank heaven, I shall want no one."—"But, Marmontel, you are angry, and I don't know why....."—"Oh! I well know why; the friend of my heart, the man on whom I reckoned most on earth, has but one word to say to extricate me from oppression....."—"Well! Good God! and I'll say it; but nothing ever gave me so much pain in my life."—"Has Duclos then so seriously offended you?"—"What! don't you know with what insolence, in full academy, he has spoken of the king of Prussia?"—"Of the king of Prussia! and what's Duclos's insolence to this king? Ah! D'Alembert, tell me that you have need of my most cruel enemy, and that, to serve you, it is only requisite to pardon him; I'll go and embrace him instantly."—"Well," said he, "this evening I'll be reconciled with Duclos; but let him serve you well; for it is only at that price, and for love of you....."—"I'm sure he'll serve me well," said I to him; and indeed, Duclos, enchanted to see D'Alembert return to him, was as active and as warm in my favour as he himself.

But at the death of Bougainville, and at the moment when I flattered myself that I should succeed him without any obstacle, D'Alembert sent for me. "Do you know," said he, "what they are plotting against you? They oppose to you a competitor, in favour of whom Praslin, D'Argental, and his wife, are soliciting votes both in town and at court. They boast of having engaged a great number of them, and I believe it; for this competitor is Thomas."—"I do not believe," I replied, "that Thomas consents to be the instrument of this manœuvre."—"But," said he, "Thomas is very much embarrassed about it. You know that they have entangled him by favours, and gratitude; beside they have long persecuted him to think of the academy; and on his representing to them that his quality of private secretary to the



minister would be an obstacle to his election, Praslin had obtained for him from the king a patent that ennobled his place. Now that the obstacle is removed, they require that he should offer himself, and they answer to him for the great majority of votes. He is at Fontainebleau with his minister, and beset by D'Argental. I advise you to go and see him."

I set off; and on arriving, I wrote to Thomas to give me a rendezvous. He answered that, at five o'clock, he would be on the border of the great bason. I waited for him there; and in coming up to him, "You surely conjecture, my dear friend," said I, "what brings me here. I come to know from you whether what I am told be true;" and I repeated to him what D'Alembert had said to me.

"It is all true," answered Thomas; "and it is true beside that M. d'Argental has signified to me this morning that M. de Praslin insists on my offering myself; that he requires of me this mark of attachment; that such has been the condition of the patent he has procured me; that, in accepting it, I must have understood why it was granted to me; and that, if I disoblige my benefactor, out of regard for a man who has offended him, I lose my place and my fortune. This is my position. Now tell me what you would do in my place."—"Are you really serious," said I, "when you ask that question?"—"Yes," he replied, smiling, and with the air of a man whose resolution was fixed.—"Well then," answered I, "in your place I would do what you will do."—"No, tell me plainly what would you do?"—"I don't pretend," said I, "to give myself for an example; but am I not your friend? Are you not mine?"—"Yes," returned he, "and I say it openly.

"I have told it to earth, to heaven, to Gusman himself."—

"Well," replied I, "if I had a son, and if he had the misfortune to serve the hatred of a Gusman against his friend, I would—" "Stop there," said Thomas to me, shaking me by the hand, "my answer is made and well made."—"Ah, my friend," said I, "do you think I doubted it?"—"Yet you are come to assure yourself of it," added he, with a gentle reproof. "Certainly not," answered I; "it is not for myself that I needed this assurance, but for those who do not know your heart so well as I know it."—"Tell them," replied he, "that if ever I enter the academy it shall be by the door of honour. And, with respect to fortune, I have enjoyed it so short a time, and have done without it so long, that I hope I have not forgotten to live without it again." At these words I was so moved, that I would have resigned the place to him if he would have accepted it, and if he could have done it with decency. But the hatred of his minister against me was so decisive, that we should have passed, he for having served it, and I for having sunk under it. We therefore adopted that open and frank conduct that became us both. He did not offer himself as a candidate; and he lost his place of secretary to the minister. However, they had not the impudence to deprive him

of that of secretary interpreter to the Swiss republic. He was received by the academy immediately after me; he was received by acclamation, but after a long interval; for, from 1763 to 1766, there was no vacancy, although the average number of deaths, in the academy, was three in two years.

I ought to mention, to the shame of the Count de Praslin, and to the glory of Thomas, that the latter, after having refused to commit an act of slavery and meanness, thought it his duty not to withdraw from the house of a man who had done him some service, till he should be dismissed. He remained with him another month, presenting himself, as usual, every morning at his levee, while this obdurate and vain man never said a single word to him, nor ever deigned to look at him. In a soul naturally proud and noble, like that of Thomas, judge how painful this humble trial must have been! At length, after having given to gratitude even more than its due, seeing how irreconcilable was the arrogance of this minister with modest and patient attention, he sent him word that he felt himself obliged to take his silence for a dismissal; and he left him. This conduct completely made known his character; and even on the side of fortune he lost nothing by having acted like an honest man. The king was pleased with him for it; and he not only obtained afterward a pension of eighty guineas on the royal treasury, but a handsome apartment at the Louvre, which was procured for him by the Count d'Angiviller, his friend and mine.

You have just seen, my dear children, through how many difficulties I arrived at the academy. But I have not told you what thorns the vanity of talents had sown in my way.

During the opposition I experienced, Madame Geoffrin was uneasy; she would sometimes pretend to rally me about them; but at every new election that retarded mine, I saw she was vexed. "Well," would she say to me, "is it then decided that you are not to be of the academy?" I, who did not wish her to be disturbed about it, answered, negligently, "that it was the least of my cares; that the author of the *Henriade*, of *Zaire*, of *Merope*, had not been received there till after he was fifty; and that I was not forty; that I should perhaps belong to it some day; that, beside, many honest men, and of distinguished merit, consoled themselves for not being of it, and that I should console myself like them. I begged her to be as little concerned about it as myself." She was not the less uneasy, and from time to time, in her way, and by little subtle words, she sounded the dispositions of the academicians.

One day, she asked me, "What has M. de Marivaux done to you, to induce you to mock him, and turn him into ridicule?"—"Me, madam?"—"Yes, you, who laugh in his face, and make others laugh at his expense....."—"Really, madam, I do not know what you mean to say."—"I mean to say what he has told me; Marivaux is an honest man, he cannot have imposed on me."—"Then he must explain to me himself what I do not understand. For in my life he has never been, either present or absent, the subject of my ridicule."—"Well! call on him, and endea-

your," said she, "to convince him of the contrary; for, even in his complaints, he is lavish of your praise." In crossing the garden of the Palais-Royal, where he lodged, I saw him, and accosted him.

He had, at first, some repugnance to explain himself; and he repeated to me that he would not be the less just to me whenever I should present myself for the academy. "Sir," said I, at last, with some impatience, "let us leave the academy out of the question, it makes no part of my motive for addressing you; it is not your vote that I solicit; it is your esteem that I reclaim, and of which I am envious." "You have it entire," answered he. "If I have it, be pleased to tell me then in what I have given rise to the complaints you make of me." "What," said he, "have you forgotten, at Madame Dubocage's, one evening, as you were sitting by Madame de Villaumont, you never ceased, either of you, to look at me and laugh in whispering to each other. It certainly was at me you laughed; and I don't know why; for on that day I was not more ridiculous than usual."

"Fortunately," said I, "what you would remind me of is fresh in my memory: the fact is this, Madame de Villaumont saw you for the first time; and as the company were crowding round you, she asked me who you were. I told her your name. She, who knew an officer of the same name, insisted that you were not M. de Marivaux. Her obstinacy diverted me; mine appeared ridiculous to her; and in describing to me the face of the Marivaux she knew, she looked at you; this is the whole mystery." "Yes," replied he, ironically, "the mistake was very laughable! yet you had both a certain arch and bantering air that I well understand, and which is not that of simple pleasantry." "Yet ours was very simple and very innocent, I assure you. Beside too," added I, "it is the naked truth. I thought I owed it to you, and I have now paid it; if you do not believe me, it will be I, Sir, who have a right to complain of you." He assured me that he believed me; and he did not fail to tell Madame Geoffrin that he had only taken this explanation for an adroit way of excusing myself to him. Death deprived me of his vote; but had he given it me, he would have thought himself generous.

Madame de Villaumont, whom I have mentioned to you, was the daughter of Madame Gaulard, and the rival of Madame de Brienne in beauty, even more lively and more inviting.

Madame Dubocage, at whose house we sometimes supped, was a woman of letters, of an estimable character, but without relief and without colouring. She, like Madame Geoffrin, had a literary society, but infinitely less agreeable, and analogous to her mild, cold, formal, and melancholy disposition. I had been of it for some time, but its gravity oppressed me, and I was driven from it by tediousness. In this woman, who was for a moment celebrated, what was truly admirable, was her modesty. She saw engraved at the bottom of her portrait *Forma Venus, arte Minerva*; and she was never caught in one impulse of vanity. Let us return to the complaints that were made against me by men of another character.

Among the academicians, whose votes were not assured to me, we reckoned the president Hénault and Moncrif. Madame Geoffrin spoke to them, and returned to me in a rage. "Is it possible," said she, "that you pass your life in making yourself enemies! there's Moncrif furious against you; and the president Hénault is scarcely less irritated." "At what, Madam; what have I done to them?" "What have you done! why you have written your *Poétique*; for you have always the rage for writing." "And in this book what is it that irritates them?" "As for Moncrif, I know what it is," said she; "he makes no secret of it, but speaks publicly. You quote a song of his, and you mutilate it. It was in five couplets; you cite but three of them." "Alas! Madam, I have cited the best, and I have only left out those which repeated the same idea." "Indeed! that is exactly what he complains of, that you wanted to correct his work. Living or dying, he will never pardon you." "Then let him live and die my enemy, Madam, for the two couplets of his song: I will support my misfortune. And the good president, what is my offence to him?" "He has not told me; but, I believe, it is of your book too that he complains. I shall know it." He told it her. But when I pressed her to repeat it to me, it was a comic scene to which the Abbé Raynal was witness.

"Well, Madam, you have seen the president Hénault, has he told you at last what has been my offence to him?" "Yes, I know it; but he forgives you; he is willing to forget it; let's say no more about it." "At least, Madam, I ought to know what this involuntary crime is, that he has the goodness to forget." "Why know it? That's very useless. You will have his vote, that's enough." "No, it is not enough; and I do not like to endure complaint without knowing why." "Madam," said the Abbé Raynal, "I think M. Marmontel is right." "Don't you see," replied she, "that he wants to know it only that he may turn it into ridicule, or make a tale of it?" "No, Madam, I promise you never to mention it, from the moment I shall know what it is." "What it is! why, your book again, and your rage for quotations. I think I have your book there." "Yes, Madam, there it is." "Let's see that song of the President's that you have quoted among your drinking songs. Here it is:

"Console me for a mistress that's false, &c.

From whom had you this song?" "From Géliote." "Well then, Géliote has not given it you such as it really is, if I must tell you. You have left out an *Oh*!" "An *Oh*, Madam!" "Why yes, an *Oh*. Is there not a verse that begins, *What charms?*" "Yes, Madam:

"What charms! ye heavens! what beauty!"

"That's it: there's the fault. You should have said: *Oh ye heavens! what beauty!*" "Why, Madam, the sense is the same." "Yes, Sir, but when you quote, you should quote correctly.

Every man is jealous of what he has written ; that is natural. The president did not ask you to quote his song." " I have quoted it with praise." " Then you should not have changed it ; since he had put, *Oh ye heavens !* which pleased him best. What had he done to you, that you must deprive him of his *Oh* ? However, he has faithfully assured me that it will not prevent him from doing justice to your talents."

The Abbé Raynal had a most longing desire to burst into laughter, and I too. But we contained ourselves ; for Madame Geoffrin was already sufficiently confused ; and when she was in the wrong there was no joking.

As we went away, I related to the abbé my adventure with Marivaux and my dispute with Moncrif. " Ah !" said he, " that proves to us that when a man is said to have enemies, we should well inquire whether he has deserved them, before we condemn him."

When I had passed this strait, my life resumed its free and tranquil course. It was divided between the town and the country, and both made me happy. Of my societies in town, the only one I no longer frequented was that of the *Menus-Plaisirs*. Cury, who had been the soul of it, was infirm and ruined. He died a short time afterward.

When his secret became known (and it was not so till after his death) I have sometimes heard it said in society that he should have declared himself the author of the parody. I have always maintained that he should not ; and wo to me if he had done it ; for it would have been he whom they would have oppressed, and I should have died with grief. My fault was my own, and it would have been in the highest degree unjust if another had suffered for it. Beside, the parody, such as the world had seen it, full of gross insults, was not that which he had written. In accusing himself of the one, he ought then to have been permitted to disavow the other ; and had he made this distinction, would it have been listened to ? His ruin would have been inevitable, and I should have been the cause of it ; by remaining silent, he did what was most just and best to do for me and for himself, and I owed to him the sweets of the life I led after my most happy misfortune had restored me to myself and to my friends.

I do not number among my intimate societies the assembly that was held every evening at Mademoiselle l'Espinasse's ; for, with the exception of some of D'Alembert's friends, as the Chevalier de Chastellux, the Abbé Morellet, Saint Lambert, and myself, this circle was formed of men who were not at all acquainted with each other. She had taken them here and there in society, but so well matched that, when they were there, they found themselves in most perfect harmony, like the strings of an instrument tuned by a skilful hand. To follow the comparison, I might say that she played on this instrument with an art that had the features of genius ; she seemed to know what sound the string that she was about to touch would produce ; I mean to say that she was so well acquainted with our minds and dispositions that she had to say but one word to bring them into play. No where was conversa-

tion more lively, more brilliant, nor better regulated than at hers. That degree of temperate and ever equal warmth, in which she knew how to support it, now by gently inclining it to moderation, and now by animating it, was a rare phenomenon. The continual activity of her soul communicated itself to our minds, but without excess: her imagination was its spring, her reason its regulator. And take notice that the heads she thus moved at her will were neither weak nor light: the Condillacs and the Turgots were of the number; D'Alembert by her side was like a simple and a docile child. Her talent for throwing out an idea, and giving it for debate to men of this class; her talent for discussing it herself, and, like them, with precision, sometimes with eloquence; her talent for introducing new ideas and varying conversation, always with the ease and the facility of a fairy who, with a stroke of her wand, changes at her will the scene of her enchantments; this talent, I say, was not that of an ordinary woman. It was not with the follies of fashion and vanity that she every day, during four hours of conversation, without langour, and without interval, knew how to render herself interesting to a circle of enlightened men. It is true that one of her charms was that ardent disposition that gave passion to her language, and communicated to her opinions the warmth, the interest, the eloquence of sentiment. Often too at her house, and very often, reason became gay: a mild philosophy there allowed itself a gentle pleasantry; D'Alembert gave the tone of it; and who ever knew better than he—

.....To mix  
The severe with the comic, the grave with the gay!

The history of a woman so singularly endowed by nature as Mademoiselle l'Espinasse should be to you, my dear children, curious and interesting. The recital of it will not be long.

There was at Paris a Marchioness du Défant, full of wit, of caprice, and of ill humour. Gallant and tolerably beautiful in her youth, but old at the time of which I am speaking, almost blind, and tormented by spleen and melancholy. Retired to a convent on a narrow fortune, she did not cease to keep still the brilliant society in which she had lived. She had become acquainted with D'Alembert at her old lover's, the president Hénault's, over whom she still tyrannised, and who, naturally very timid, had continued to be the slave of fear, long after he had ceased to be that of love. Madame du Défant, charmed with the wit and gaiety of D'Alembert, had invited him to her house, and so captivated him, that he was inseparable from her. He lived at a distance from her, and he never passed a day without going to see her.

At the same time, to fill the vacant moments of her solitude, Madame du Défant was looking for a young well-educated girl, without fortune, who would be her companion, and who in the quality of friend, that is, of a devoted slave, would live with her in her convent. She happened to meet with Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, and she was enchanted with her, as you may suppose.

D'Alembert was not less charmed to find so interesting a third at the house of his old friend.

Between this young lady and him misfortune had made an affinity that might well induce their souls to harmonize. They were both what are called children of love. I saw this nascent friendship, when Madame du Défant used to bring them with her to sup at my friend Madame Harenc's; and it was then that our acquaintance began. There wanted nothing less than such a friend as D'Alembert to soften and render supportable to Mademoiselle l'Espinasse the melancholy and the severity of her situation; for it was not enough to be the slave of perpetual attentions to a blind and splenetic woman, it was requisite, to live with her, to turn day into night and night into day, as she did, to sit up by her bedside, and read her to sleep; an exertion that was mortal to this young girl, naturally delicate, and from which her exhausted lungs were never afterward able to recover. Yet she persevered in it, till an incident happened that broke her chain.

Madame du Défant, after having sat up all night at home, or at Madame de Luxembourg's, who kept as late hours as herself, used to sleep all day, and was not visible till about six in the evening. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, retired in her little chamber, that looked into the court of the convent, did not rise more than an hour before her marchioness; but that hour so precious, stolen from her slavery, was employed in receiving in her own apartment her personal friends, D'Alembert, Chastellux, Turgot, and me occasionally. Now these gentlemen were likewise the habitual company of Mademoiselle du Défant; and the moments they thus passed with Mademoiselle l'Espinasse were stolen from her; this private rendezvous was therefore a mystery to her; for they easily foresaw that she would be jealous of it. She discovered it; and she insisted that it was nothing less than treason. She told it every where, accusing this poor girl of withdrawing her friends from her, and declaring that she would no longer foster such a serpent in her bosom.

This separation was abrupt; but Mademoiselle l'Espinasse was not abandoned. All the friends of Madame du Défant were become hers. It was easy for her to persuade them that the anger of this woman was unjust. The president Hénault himself declared for her. The Dutchess of Luxembourg thought her old friend in the wrong, and made Mademoiselle l'Espinasse a present of some furniture for the lodgings she took. Finally, through the Duke de Choiseul, her friends obtained for her, from the king, an annual gratification, that put her above want; and the most distinguished circles in Paris disputed the pleasure of her company.

D'Alembert, to whom Madame du Défant imperiously proposed the alternative of renouncing the friendship of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, or her own, did not hesitate, and gave himself wholly to his young friend. They lived at a distance from each other; and though, in bad weather, it was painful for D'Alembert to return in an evening from the rue Belle-Chasse to the rue Michael-le-Comte, where his nurse lived; he did not think of quit-

ting this latter But at her house he fell sick, and so dangerously as to alarm Bouvart, his physician. His disorder was one of those putrid fevers whose first remedy is a free and pure air. Now, his lodging at his glazier's was a little chamber badly lighted, badly aired, with a bed like a coffin. Bouvart declared to us that the incommodiousness of his lodging might be very fatal to him. Watelet offered him one in his hotel, near the *boulevard du temple*; he was carried there; and Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, whatever might be thought and said of it, determined to be his nurse. No one thought or said of it any thing but praise.

D'Alembert was restored to life, and from that moment consecrating his days to her who had preserved them, he desired to live near her. Nothing could be more innocent than their intimacy: it was therefore respected; malice itself never attacked it; and the consideration that Mademoiselle l'Espinasse enjoyed, far from suffering any blemish from it, was the more honourably and the more firmly established. But this union so pure, and on the part of D'Alembert always tender and unalterable, was neither so grateful to him, nor so happy as it ought to have been.

The ardent soul and romantic imagination of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse made her conceive the project of rising from the narrow mediocrity in which she was fearful of finishing her days. With all the means she possessed of seducing and of pleasing, even without being beautiful, it appeared to her very possible, that, in the number of her friends, and even among the most distinguished, some one might be so in love with her, as to offer her his hand. This ambitious hope, more than once deceived, did not despond; it changed its object, always more exalted, and so lively, that it might have been taken for the intoxication of love. For instance, she was at one time so passionately struck with what she called the heroism and the genius of Guibert, that, in the art of war and for the talent of writing, she saw nothing comparable to him. Yet he escaped her like the rest. Then it was the conquest of the Marquis de Mora, a young Spaniard of high birth, to whom she thought she might aspire; and indeed, whether it were love or enthusiasm, this young man had conceived a passionate sentiment for her. We saw him more than once in adoration before her, and the impression she had made on his soul assumed so serious a character, that the family of the marquis hastened to recal him. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, crossed in her desires, was no longer the same with d'Alembert; and he not only endured her coldness, and caprice, but often the bitterness of her wounded temper. He brooked his sorrows, and complained only to me. Unhappy man! such were his devotion and his obedience to her, that, in the absence of M. de Mora, it was he who used to go early in a morning to ask for his letters at the post-office, and bring them to her when she awoke. At last, the young Spaniard falling sick in his own country, and his family waiting only his recovery to marry him suitably, Mademoiselle l'Espinasse contrived to have it pronounced, by a physician at Paris, that the climate of Spain would be mortal to him; that, if his friends wished to save his life, they should send him to breathe



the air of France; and this consultation, dictated by Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, was obtained by D'Alembert from his intimate friend Lorry, one of the most celebrated physicians in Paris. The authority of Lorry, supported by the patient, had in Spain all its effect. The young man was suffered to set off on his return; but he died on the road, and the deep sorrow that Mademoiselle l'Espinasse felt at it completed the destruction of that frail machine that her soul had ruined, and brought her to the grave.

D'Alembert was inconsolable for his loss. It was then that he came as it were to bury himself in the lodging he had at the Louvre. I have said elsewhere how he passed there the rest of his life. He often complained to me of the fatal solitude into which he fancied himself fallen. In vain did I remind him of what he had so often said to me, on the change in his fair friend. "Yes," answered he, "she was changed, but I was not so; she no longer lived for me, but I always lived for her. Since she is no more, I know not why I live. Ah! why have I not still to suffer those moments of bitterness, that she so well knew how to sweeten and to make me forget! Do you remember the happy evenings we passed together? At present, what have I left? I return home, and, instead of her, I find but her shade. This lodging at the Louvre is itself a tomb, which I never enter but with horror."

I here resume in substance the conversations that we had together, as we walked alone in an evening in the Tuileries; and I ask whether this is the language of a man to whom nature had refused sensibility of heart?

Much happier than he, I lived in a circle of the most seducing women, without being tied to any one by the bonds of slavery. Neither the pretty and inviting Filleul, nor the witty and beautiful Séran, nor the dazzling Villaumont, nor any one of those who delighted me, troubled my repose. As I well knew they did not think of me, I had neither the simplicity nor the fatuity to think of them. I could have said with Atys, and with more sincerity:

I love the opening roses;  
I love to see them blossom:  
Were not their thorns so cruel,  
I'd press them to my bosom.

What charmed me in them were the graces of the mind, the mobility of their imagination, the easy and natural turn of their ideas and their language, and a certain delicacy of fancy and of feeling, that, like their faces, seems reserved for their sex. Their conversations were a school for me, not less useful than agreeable; and, as much as was possible for me, I profited by their lessons. He that will only write with precision, energy, and vigour, may live only with men. But he who wishes for suppleness in his style, for amenity, for invitation, and that something which we call charm, will, I believe, do very right to live with women. When I read that Pericles sacrificed every morning to the graces, what I understand by it is, that every day Pericles breakfasted with Aspasia.

Yet however interesting on the side of intellect the society of these engaging women was to me, it did not prevent me from going to fortify my soul, to elevate, extend, enlarge, and fertilise my ideas in a society of men, whose minds penetrated mine with warmth and with light. The house of Baron d'Holbach, and afterward that of Helvétius, was the rendezvous of this society, partly composed of the flower of Madame Geoffrin's convivial friends, and partly of some others who were thought by Madame Geoffrin too bold and adventurous to be admitted to her dinners. She esteemed Baron d'Holbach; she loved Diderot; but silently, and without exposing herself for them. It is true that she had admitted, and, as it were, adopted Helvetius; but it was while he was young, and before he had committed any follies.

I have never known why D'Alembert kept himself aloof from the society of which I am speaking. He and Diderot, associates in the labours and glory of the undertaking of the *Encyclopédie*, had at first been cordially united; but they were now no longer so; they spoke of each other with much esteem, but they did not associate together, and scarcely ever met. I have never dared to ask them the reason of it.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Buffon were for some time of this philosophic society. But the former left us at open enmity; and the latter, with more management and address, withdrew and kept himself apart. As for these, I think I well know what was the system of their conduct.

Buffon, with the king's cabinet and his natural history, felt himself strong enough to live with some magnificence. He saw that the *Encyclopédique* school was out of favour at court and with the king; he was afraid of being enveloped in the common wreck; and, to continue his prosperous voyage with swelling sails, or at least to steer prudently alone among the rocks, he preferred having a free and separate bark to himself. No one was offended at it. But his retreat had still another cause.

Buffon, surrounded at home by flatterers and devoted admirers, and accustomed to an obsequious deference for his systematic ideas, was sometimes disagreeably surprised to find among us less reverence and docility. I used to see him go away dissatisfied at the opposition he had endured. With incontestable merit, he had an arrogance and a presumption that at least equalled it. Spoiled by adulation, and placed by the multitude in the class of our great men, he had the vexation of seeing that the mathematicians, the chemists, the astronomers, granted him but a very inferior rank among them; that the naturalists themselves were but little disposed to put him at their head, and that, among men of letters, he obtained only the slender praise of an elegant writer, and a great colourist. Some even reproached him with having written pompously on a subject that required a simple and natural style. I recollect that one of his friends having asked me how I should speak of him, if I were chosen to make his funeral oration at the French academy, I answered that I should give him a distinguished place among poets of the descriptive kind; a way of praising him with which he was by no means satisfied.

Buffon, uncomfortable with his equals, shut himself up at home with a few ignorant and servile flatterers, going to neither of the academies, courting apart the favour of the ministers, and labouring to extend his reputation in foreign courts, from which he received handsome presents in exchange for his work ; but at least his peaceful vanity injured no one. It was not the same with that of Rousseau.

After the success which his two works, crowned at Dijon, had produced on the jejune, Rousseau, foreseeing that by colouring paradoxes with his style, and by animating them with his eloquence, it would be easy for him to draw after him a crowd of enthusiasts, conceived the ambition of forming a sect ; and, instead of being a simple associate in the philosophic school, he wanted to be the chief and sole professor in a school of his own ; but in withdrawing from our society, like Buffon, without dispute and without noise, he would not have completed his object. To attract the crowd, he had attempted to give himself the air of an old philosopher ; he shewed himself at the opera, in the coffee-houses, in the walks, first in an old great coat, and then in the habit of an Armenian ; but neither his little dirty wig, and the stick of Diogenes, nor his fur cap, arrested the passengers. He wanted some grand disturbance to advertise the enemies of men of letters, and particularly of those who were marked with the name of philosophers, that J. J. Rousseau was divorced from them. This rupture would draw to him a crowd of partizans ; and he had well calculated that the priests would be of the number. It was therefore not enough for him to separate from Diderot and from his friends ; he abused them ; and, by a dart of calumny directed against Diderot, he gave the signal of the war he had declared against them on parting.

At the same time their society, consoled for this loss, and little affected by the ingratitude which Rousseau professed, found in its own bosom the most grateful pleasures that the liberty of thought and the commerce of minds can procure. We were no longer led and held by leading strings, as at Madame Geoffrin's. But this liberty was not licence, and there are revered and inviolable objects that were never submitted to the debate of opinions. God, virtue, the holy laws of natural morality, were there never subjected to doubt, at least in my presence ; this I can attest. The career was still vast enough ; and mind took such bold flights there, that I sometimes thought I heard the disciples of Pythagoras or of Plato. It was there that Galiani was so astonishing for the originality of his ideas, and for the adroit, singular, unforeseen turn, by which he effected their development ; it was there that the chemist Roux revealed to us, like a man of genius, the mysteries of nature ; it was there that Baron D'Holbach, who had read every thing, and forgotten nothing interesting, poured out abundantly the riches of his memory ; it was there above all, with his mild and persuasive eloquence, and his face sparkling with the fire of inspiration, that Diderot spread light into every mind, and his warmth into every heart. He that has only known Diderot by his writings, has not known him. His systems on the

art of writing disfigured his charming simplicity. When he was animated by conversation, and suffered the abundance of his ideas to flow from their source, he forgot his theories and suffered himself to be carried on by the impulse of the moment; it was then that he was enchanting. In his writings he never knew how to form a whole: that first operation, that regulates and puts every thing in its place, was for him too slow and too painful. He wrote with fire, before he had meditated any thing: so that he has written beautiful pages, as he used to say himself, but he has never written a book. This defect of plan disappeared in the free and varied course of conversation.

One of Diderot's delightful moments was when an author consulted him on his work. If the subject were worth the pains, you should have seen him seize it, penetrate it, and at one view discover of what riches, and of what beauties it was susceptible. If he perceived that the author had succeeded ill, instead of listening to the reading, his fancy supplied the defects of the work. If it were a play, he would imagine new scenes, new incidents, new traits of character; and, thinking he had heard what he had meditated, he extolled to us the piece that had just been read to him, and in which, when it appeared, we found scarcely any thing of what he had cited of it. In general, and in all the branches of human knowledge, all was so familiar to him, and so present to his mind, that he always appeared prepared for whatever might be said to him; and his most sudden perceptions were like the results of recent study, or of long meditation.

● This man, one of the most enlightened of the age, was likewise one of the most engaging; and particularly on what concerned moral goodness; when he spoke freely on it, I cannot express what charm the eloquence of sentiment had in him. His whole soul was in his eyes, and on his lips. Never did the face paint better the goodness of the heart.

I do not mention those of our friends whom you have just seen under the eye of Madame Geoffrin, and submitted to her discipline. At Baron d'Holbach's, and at Helvétius's, they were at their ease, and so much the more agreeable; for mind, in its action, can only display to advantage its force and its grace, when there is nothing that confines it; and there it resembled Virgil's courser:

Qualis, ubi abruptis fugit præsepia vinclis  
Tandem liber equus, campoque potitus aperto:  
Emicat, arrectisque fremit cervicibus altè  
Luxurians.

You must feel how grateful it was to me to get excellent dinners three times a week in such good company: we were all so happy together that, when the fine weather came, we mixed with these dinners philosophical walks in the environs of Paris, on the borders of the Seine. On those days we used to make pic-nic dinners; and the feast was an ample *matelote*: we visited, in their turn, the places most celebrated for fine fish, most frequently Saint Cloud: we used to go down there in a morning in a boat, breath-

ing the air of the river, and we returned in the evening through the wood of Boulogne. You will readily believe that in these excursions, conversation rarely languished.

Finding myself once alone for some minutes with Diderot, and our conversation turning on the letter to D'Alembert on the stage, I expressed to him my indignation at the note which Rousseau had added to the preface to the letter; it was a concealed dagger, with which he had wounded Diderot. The text of the letter was this.

"I had a severe and judicious Aristarchus; I have him no longer; I will have him no longer; and my heart has still less need of him than my writings."

The note he had added to the text was this:

*"If you have drawn your sword against your friend, do not despair; for there are means of being reconciled to your friend. If you have grieved him by your words, fear nothing; it is still possible to be reconciled to him. But for abuse, injurious reproof, the revealing of a secret, and the wound made in his heart by treachery, there is no pardon in his eyes; he will depart to return no more. Ecclesiast. xxii, 26, 27.*

All the world knew that this defamatory note was addressed to Diderot, and many people thought that he had deserved it, because he did not refute it.

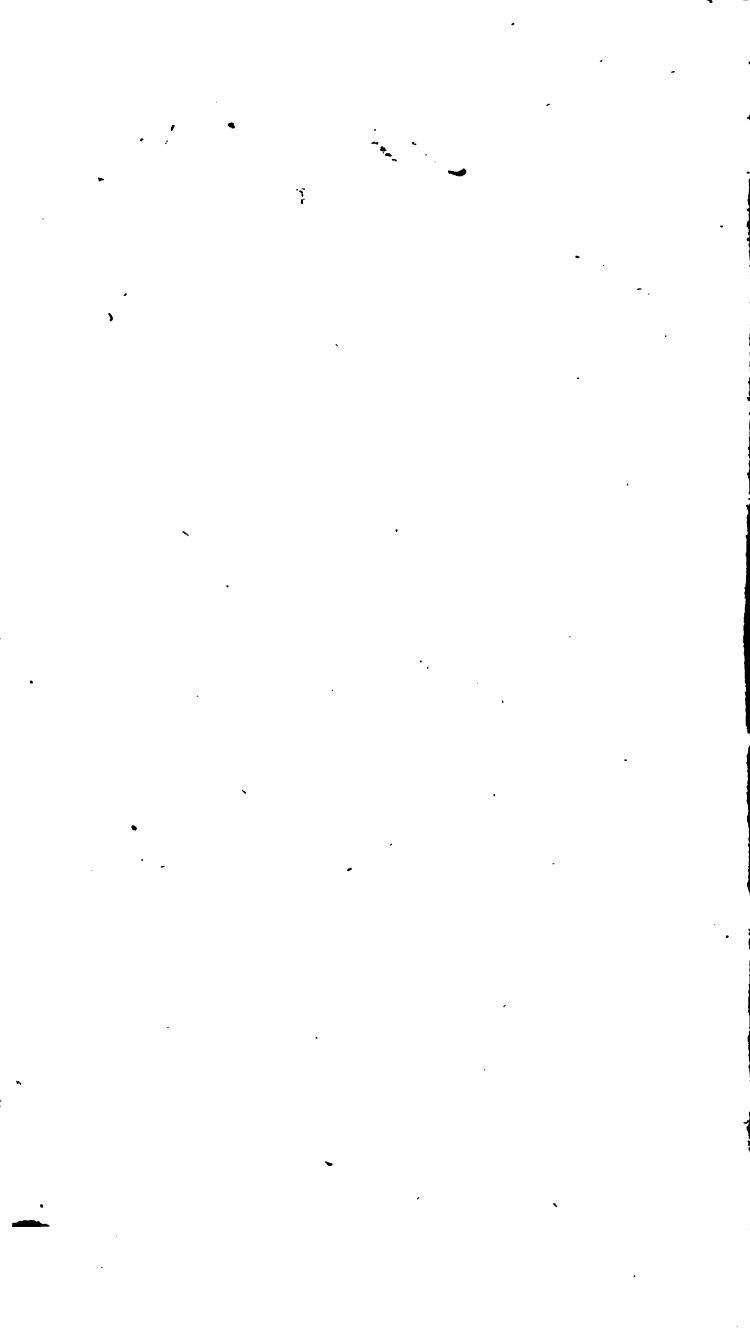
"My opinion," said I, "can never waver between you and Rousseau: I know you, and I think I know him. But tell me by what madness, and under what pretext, he has so cruelly abused you."—"Let us retire," said he, "into this solitary alley; there I will confide to you what I only deposit in the bosom of my friends."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



MEMOIRS  
OF  
MARMONTEL,  
VOL. II.

Marmontel  
AN  
Marmontel





MEMOIRS  
*Joseph Marmontel*  
MARMONTEL,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

CONTAINING

HIS LITERARY AND POLITICAL LIFE,

AND

ANECDOTES

OF THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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# MEMOIRS OF MARMONTEL, &c.

## BOOK VIII.

WHEN Diderot perceived himself alone with me, and so far from the company as not to be heard by them, he began his recital in these words: "If you did not already know a part of what I have to tell you, I should observe the same silence with you that I observe with the public, on the origin and motive of the insult I have endured from a man whom I loved and whom I still pity; for I am persuaded he is very wretched! It is cruel to be calumniated, to be so most atrociously, to be so in the perfidious tone of violated friendship, and to be incapable of defence; yet such is my situation. You will see that mine is not the only character exposed in this dispute; and when we can only defend our own honour at the expense of that of another, we must be silent; and I am so on that principle. Rousseau loads me with insult, without explaining himself; but I, in order to answer him, must descend to explanation; I must divulge what he has passed over in silence; and he has well foreseen that I should do no such thing. He was very sure that I should leave him the full enjoyment of his outrage, rather than impart to the public a secret that is not mine. And, in this respect, Rousseau is a dishonourable aggressor; he strikes a disarmed man.

"You know what an unhappy passion Rousseau had conceived for Madame \* \* \*. He had one day the rashness to declare it to her in a way that could not but offend her. A little while afterward he came to Paris to see me. 'I am a madman,' said he, 'I am ruined and undone; I must confide to you what has happened to me.' He then told me his adventure.—'Well!' said I, 'and where is the evil?'—'What!' replied he, 'where is the evil! don't you see that she will instantly write to \* \* \* and say that I have attempted to seduce her, to steal her from his love! and can you doubt of his accusing me of insolence and of perfidy! During life I have made him my mortal enemy.'—'No such thing,' said I coldly; '\* \* \* is a man of equity; he is acquainted with your character; he knows that you are neither a Cyrus nor a Scipio. After all, of what could he complain? of a moment of wild forgetfulness and delirium. You must yourself, without delay, write to him, confess all, and, in pleading as your excuse an intoxication of passion, that he cannot but understand, entreat him to pardon you this moment of error and disorder. I promise you, he will only recollect it to love you more tenderly.'

"Rousseau, transported with joy, embraced me.—'You restore me to life,' said he; 'and the counsel you give me reconciles me to myself: I will write this very evening.'—When we

saw each other, he appeared more tranquil, and I concluded he had done as we had agreed.

"Some time afterward \* \* \* arrived; and, calling on me, appeared, without explaining himself, so profoundly indignant against Rousseau, that my first idea was that Rousseau had never written.—'Have you received no letter from him?' asked I.—'Yes,' said he, 'a letter that merits the severest punishment.'

"'Ah! sir,' I replied, 'is it possible that a moment of madness, which he confesses and solicits you to pardon, should thus strongly irritate you? If that letter offends you, it is I whom you should accuse; for it is I who advised him to write.' 'And do you know,' said he, 'what that letter contains?'—'I know that it contains an avowal, excuses, and intreaties of pardon.'—'Far from it. It is a tissue of knavery and insolence; it is a masterpiece of artifice to reflect on Madame \* \* \* the wrong of which he wants to clear himself.'—'You astonish me,' said I: 'that is by no means what he promised me to write.' Then, in order to appease him, I related to him simply the grief and the repentance that Rousseau had manifested at the idea of having offended him, and the resolution he had formed of asking his pardon; thus, I led him, without difficulty, till I excited his pity.

"It is to this explanation that Rousseau has given the name of perfidy. As soon as he learned that I had made a confession for him, which he had not made for himself, he fell into an excess of rage, and accused me of having betrayed him. I was told of it; I went to him.—'Why are you come here?' asked he. 'I come,' said I, 'to know whether you are mad, or malicious.'—'Neither,' he replied; 'but you have wounded, you have rent my heart. Our friendship's at an end.'—I asked what I had done?—He answered, 'You have dived into the deepest recesses of my soul; you have torn from me my secret, and betrayed it. You have devoted me to the contempt, to the hatred of a man, who will never forgive me.' I suffered this boiling to evaporate, and, when he had exhausted himself in reproaches,—'We are alone,' said I, 'and, between ourselves, your eloquence is useless. Our judges here are reason, truth, your conscience, and my own. Will you interrogate them?' Without answering me, he threw himself into his arm-chair, concealing his eyes with his hands, and I continued.

'The day,' said I, 'on which we agreed that you should be sincere, in your letter to \* \* \*, you told me that you were reconciled to yourself. Who induced you to change your resolution? You do not answer; I will answer for you. When it became requisite for you to take your pen, and make the unfortunate confession of an unfortunate folly, a confession that at the same time could but have honoured you, your infernal pride assumed all its empire. Yes, your pride: you have accused me of perfidy, and I have suffered it; suffer me, in return, to accuse you of pride; for, had you not that plea, your conduct would be only meanness. Pride then whispered to you that it would be unworthy of your character to humble yourself before this man, and to ask pardon of a happy rival; that it was not yourself you should accuse, but

her, whose seducing graces, bewitching coquetry, and flattering blandishments, had enticed you. And you, with all your art, colouring this fine excuse, did not perceive that, by attributing the hues of a coquette to a woman of delicacy and sensibility, in the eyes of a man who esteems and loves her, you rent two hearts at once.—‘Well!’ cried he, ‘suppose me unjust, imprudent, mad, what do you infer from it, that can justify you in my sight for having betrayed my confidence, and revealed the secret of my heart?’—‘I infer,’ replied I, ‘that it is you who have deceived me; it is you who have induced me to defend you, as I have done. Why did you not tell me that you had changed your intention? I should not have spoken of your repentance; I should not have fancied that I was simply repeating the language of your letter. You concealed yourself from me, in order to do what you well know I should not have approved; and, when this act of your wisdom has the effect that it ought to have, you impute it to me as a crime! Go; since in the sincerest and tenderest friendship you seek for subjects of hatred, your heart knows only how to hate.’

“‘Courage, barbarian!’ said he; ‘complete the torments of a weak and miserable man. For consolation, I had nothing left me on earth but my own esteem,’ and you come to tear it from me.’—Rousseau was at this moment more eloquent, and more touching in his affliction, than he ever was in his life. Penetrated to the soul, at the state in which I saw him, my eyes overflowed with tears; my weeping affected him, and he received me in his arms.

“Here then we were reconciled; he occasionally continuing to read to me his *Nouvelle Héloïse*, which he had finished, and I going on foot, two or three times a-week, from Paris to his hermitage, to hear him read it, and to answer as a friend the confidence of my friend. Our rendezvous was in the woods of Montmorency; I used to arrive there heated from head to foot; and he never ceased to complain if I had made him wait. At that time appeared his letter on the stage, with that beautiful passage from Solomon, by which he accuses me of having abused and betrayed him.

“—‘What!’ exclaimed I to myself, ‘in profound peace! After our reconciliation! It is not credible. I grant it is not; and yet it is the simple truth.’ Rousseau wanted to separate from me and from my friends; and he had missed a most favourable opportunity. What could indeed be more convenient than to attribute wrongs to me, from which I could not clear myself? Vexed at having lost this advantage, he resumed it, persuading himself that, on my part, our reconciliation had been but a scene that was played, and in which I had imposed on him.”

“What a man!” exclaimed I; “and yet he fancies himself kind-hearted!” Diderot replied—“He should be so; for he was born with sensibility; and, at a distance, he loves every human being. He only hates those who approach him, because his vanity induces him to think that they are all envious of him; that they serve him only to humble him; that they flatter him but to injure him;

and that even those who pretend to love him share in the conspiracy. This is his disease. Interesting on account of his misfortunes, his talents, and a fund of kindness and rectitude that his heart cherishes, he would have friends, if he believed in friendship. As it is, he will never have any, or they will love him singly; for he will always distrust them. This fatal mistrust, this light and prompt facility, not only of suspecting, but of believing, of his friends, all that is most atrocious, most mean, and most infamous: of attributing to them baseness and perfidy, without any other proof than the dreams of an ardent and sombre imagination, whose vapours cloud his disordered brain, and whose malignant influence sours and poisons his gentlest affections; in short, this delirium of a melancholy and timid mind, made savage by misfortune, was most truly the disease of Rousseau, and the torment of his soul."

Of this every day furnished fresh examples, by the injurious way in which he broke with those who were most devoted to him, accusing them at one time of secret projects for ensnaring him, and at another of coming to his house only to be spies on his actions, that they might betray and sell him to his enemies. I know some of these details that are incredible. But the most astonishing of all was the monstrous ingratitude with which he repaid the tender, indulgent, active friendship of the virtuous David Hume, and the profound malignity with which, in calumniating him, he added insult to injury. You will find, even in the collection of the works of Rousseau, this monument of his shame. You will there see with what artifice he contrived his calumny; you will there see from what false lights he fancied he could convict his truest friend, the most honourable and the best of men, of duplicity, of infamy, of violated faith. You will not read without indignation, in the recital he makes of his conduct towards his benefactor, this turn of raillery that is the height of insolence;

*First box on the ear of my patron.*

*Second box on the ear of my patron.*

*Third box on the ear of my patron.*

I believe the universal opinion is fully decided with respect to these two men: but if, to the idea that is entertained of the character of David Hume, some proof were still wanting, here are facts to which I was a witness.

When, on the recommendation of the Countess de Boufflers, Hume offered Rousseau to procure him a free and tranquil retreat in England, and Rousseau had accepted this generous offer, Hume, who was acquainted with Baron d'Holbach, informed him, just before his departure, that he was to take Rousseau away with him into his native country—"Sir," said the baron, "you are warming a viper in your bosom; I warn you of it, you will feel its bite."

The Baron had himself welcomed Rousseau, and shewn him every indulgence; his house was the rendezvous of those who were called philosophers; and in the full security which the inviolable sanctity of the asylum where they meet inspires in honourable

souls, d'Holbach and his friends had admitted Rousseau to their particular intimacy. In his *Emile*, you may see how he had noted them. Most certainly, had the title of atheism, which he has affixed to their society, been only a simple revelation, it would have been odious. But, with respect to the greater number, it was a calumnious accusation; and he well knew it. He well knew that the theism of his vicar had among them its proselytes, and its zealots. The baron then had been taught, at his cost, to understand his character. But the good David Hume fancied he saw more passion than truth in the baron's observation. He therefore took Rousseau away with him, and rendered him, in his own country, all the kindest offices of friendship. He believed, and he had a right to believe, that he had restored the most feeling and the best of men to happiness; he congratulated himself on it, in all the letters which he wrote to Baron d'Holbach; and did not cease to combat the bad opinion that the baron entertained of Rousseau. He spoke to him in praise of the kindness, the candour, the ingenuousness of his friend. "It is painful to me," he used to say, "to think that you are unjust to him. Believe me, Rousseau can never have a bad heart. The more I see of him, the more I esteem and love him." Every courier brought letters from Hume to d'Holbach that repeated the same praises; and the latter, on reading them to us, would say: *he does not know him yet; he will know him ere long.* Indeed, a little time afterward he receives a letter in which Hume begins thus: *You were very right, baron! Rousseau is a monster!* Ah! said the baron to us, coldly and without surprise, *He knows him now.*

How could so abrupt and so sudden a change have happened in the opinion of the one, and in the conduct of the other? You will see it explained in the narrative of facts, published by the two parties. Here, what I ought to certify and attest is, that while Rousseau was accusing Hume of deceiving, betraying, of dishonouring him in London, that same Hume, full of candour, zeal, and friendship, was exerting himself to destroy at Paris the fatal impressions he had left there, and to re-establish him in the esteem and benevolence of those who had most aversion and contempt for him.

What ravages had an excess of pride made in a soul naturally gentle and tender! With so much intellect, and such talents, what weakness, what littleness, what contemptible meanness in that restless, melancholy, irascible, and vindictive vanity, that was irritated at the bare idea of an attempt to wound it; that fancied enemies where nothing indicated them, and that never pardoned these imaginary crimes! What an important lesson to minds that incline to the vice of vanity! Without it, no one would have been more beloved nor more esteemed than Rousseau. It was the poison of his life; it rendered services odious to him, benefactors insupportable, gratitude importunate; made him injure and repulse friendship; and caused him to live wretched, and die almost abandoned. Let us turn to gentler objects, and that touch me more nearly.

Neither the agreeable life that I led at Paris, nor that yet more

agreeable one of the country, ever stole from my dear Odde and my sister the delicious fortnight that was, every year, reserved for them, and that I went to pass with them at Saumur. It was there that the whole sensibility of my soul was truly employed in grateful enjoyment. By this happy couple, who loved each other more than they loved the light of heaven and life, I saw myself cherished and revered as the source of their happiness. I could not satiate myself with the inexpressible delight of contemplating my own work, in the happiness of two pure souls, whose every vow was addressed to heaven for blessings on me. Their tenderness went to my heart, their piety enchanted me. Their manners were, if I may so say, native virtue in all its simplicity. To this continual and uninterrupted enjoyment was added that of seeing them beloved and honoured in the town where they lived. Madame Odde was there cited as the model of women; the name of M. Odde was synonymous with justice and truth. If the commission of the court of excise, established at Saumur, and the company of the farmers-general had any dispute together, Odde was their umpire, and their conciliator. I was a witness to this confidence acquired by one who was as another self to me. I witnessed the love of the people, for a man exercising a severe office, against whom no complaints were ever heard, so eminently did his humanity soften all transactions. I myself shared the respect that was paid to them. They were perpetually occupied in contriving new enjoyments for me, and the few days we passed together were all days of rejoicing. You would not have been born, my dear children, if my good sister had lived: I should quietly have retired to pass my age with her; but she bore in her bosom the germ of that malady that had been fatal to all my family; and this hope, with which I had flattered myself, was soon ravished from me most cruelly.

In one of those happy journeys to Saumur, the vicinity of Elm-partie induced me to go and pay a visit to the Count d'Argenson, who had been minister of war, and whom the king had sent there in exile. I had not forgotten the kindness he had shown me, in the time of his prosperity. Still young, when I wrote a little poem on the establishment of the military school, of which he had the principal honour, he had been pleased to set some value on this testimony of my zeal. At his house, at dinner, he had presented me to the noblemen of the army, as a young man who had claims to his gratitude and his protection. He received me in his exile with extreme sensibility. Oh, my dear children! what an incurable disease is ambition! What a miserable destiny is that of an exiled minister! Already worn out by labour and application, vexation was completing the ruin of his health. His body was tormented with gout, his soul was still more cruelly tortured by memory and regret: and, during the kind reception he was pleased to give me, I plainly saw in him the victim of every kind of affliction.

As I was walking with him in his gardens, I perceived a marble statue at a distance; I asked him what it was. "It is that," said he, "which I have no longer the courage to look at." And



as we turned away: "Ah! Marmontel! if you knew with what zeal I have served him! If you knew how often he assured me that we should pass our lives together, and that I had no better friend in the world than him! These are the promises of kings! This their friendship!" and, in saying these words, the tears started in his eyes.

In the evening, during supper, we remained alone in the drawing-room. This drawing-room was hung with pictures, that represented the battles in which the king had served in person with him. He shewed me where they were placed during the action; he repeated to me what the king had said to him; he had not forgotten a word. "Here," said he, in speaking of one of these battles, "I was two hours in the firm persuasion that my son was dead. The king had the kindness to appear to sympathise in my affliction. How changed is he now! My sorrows no longer touch him." These ideas haunted him; and, if he was suffered to indulge them, he sank buried, as it were, in his grief. His daughter-in-law, Madame de Voyer, would then hasten to seat herself by his side, press him in her arms, and caress him; while he, like a child, letting fall his head on the bosom, or on the knees of her who consoled him, would bathe them with tears that he did not wish to hide.

This unhappy man, who lived only on boiled fish, on account of his gout, was thereby deprived too of that single pleasure of the senses which would have been grateful to him; for he loved to indulge his appetite. But the severest regimen did not even soothe his pains. In quitting him, I could not help appearing strongly affected at his sorrows. "You add to them," said he, "the regret of having done you no service, when that would have been so easy to me." A little time afterward he obtained leave to be brought to Paris. I saw him arrive there dying; and there I received his last farewell.

I will tell you some day, my dear children, some curious details on the cause of his disgrace; and of that of his antagonist, M. de Machault, which happened on the same day. A motive of delicacy prevents me from inserting these particulars in memoirs, which, by some accident, may escape from your hands. But, instead of this serious anecdote, I will tell you one that is comic; for my recital should sometimes amuse you.

My friend, Vandesir, had an estate near Angers, which bore the name of his unhappy son, Sainte-James. As he knew that I went every year to Saumur (on the road to Angers) to see my sister, he once offered to take me there in his post-chaise, on condition that, before my return, I should pass three days at Sainte-James, whither he was going. I willingly accepted this proposal, and saw at Sainte-James the flower of the fine wits of the *Angvine* academy; among others, an abbé, who was very like the Abbé Beau Génie, in the *Mercure-Galant*. He had just signalized himself by a trait of folly so singular, so very rare, that I could not believe it. "Will you credit me," said Vandesir, "if he repeats it to you himself? Only aid me in leading him to the question, and you shall see." When dinner was nearly over, I brought

the abbé into play, by talking to him of his academy; and Vandesir made him a pompous eulogy on it. "After the French academy," said he to me, "there is no literary body more illustrious, nor better composed. The young M. de Contades has very lately been received a member: it is M. l'Abbé who spoke on that occasion in the name of the academy, and with the greatest success."—"To the eulogy of the son," replied I, "M. l'Abbé has not failed to add that of the father?"—"No certainly," said the abbé, "I took care not to neglect that, and I paid the marshal a just tribute of praise."—The field, I replied, was rich and vast. But there was one strait that was difficult to pass.—"Yes," said he to me, smiling, "the affair of Minden, that was indeed the critical pass; but I got through it happily enough. First of all, I spoke of the actions by which Marshal Contades had merited the command of the armies; I retraced all that he had done most glorious till that period; and when I arrived at the battle of Minden, I said but two words: *Contade appears, Contade is conquered*. I then passed on continuing my panegyric." As it required all my exertion to stifle laughter, I wanted to turn the subject. "These words," said I, "call to my mind those of Cæsar, after the defeat of the son of Mithridates: *I came, I saw, I conquered*."—"True," answered the abbé; "my phrase has even been thought somewhat more laconic." The air of emphasis and gravity, with which he had pronounced his laconic folly, was so ridiculous, that Vandesir and I dared not look at each other, lest we should burst into laughter: we had the greatest difficulty in keeping ourselves serious.

These journeys and this absence displeased Madame Geoffrin. The whole summer long I never went to the academy. She heard me censured for it; she fancied that I was injuring myself essentially, by resigning the game to the assiduous academicians (which, with respect to the Olivets, was certainly an idle fear) and I often endured sharp reprimands, on what she called the inconsistency of my conduct. "What can indeed be more absurd," said she, "than to have desired to be of the academy, and not to attend there after having been received?" My excuse was the example of the greater number, still less assiduous than myself. But she retorted with reason that I was one of those whose academic functions required assiduity. She had too her little personal interest in these remonstrances; for she passed the summers in Paris, and at that time was anxious that her literary society should not be dispersed. I listened to her counsel with a respectful modesty, and the next day I stole away as if she had said nothing. It was very natural that her kindness for me should have cooled, but by being entertaining at a single dinner, I could reconcile myself to her, and on serious occasions she recollected her affection for me. I experienced it in two disorders, with which I was attacked at her house. One was that same fever which has seized me five times in my life, and which will finish by destroying me: it attacked me while my *Poétique* [Art of Poetry] was in the press. I wanted to add some few articles; and this labour, with which my head was filled, rendered the delirium more fatiguing in the pa-

reuxisms of my fever. My friends were very uneasy, and Madame Geoffrin was alarmed; but the little physician that used to attend her servants, Geogian, restored me to perfect health.

My other disorder was a cold of a singular kind: it was a viscous humour, that obstructed the organ of respiration, attended with all the effort of a violent cough, though I could not expectorate. You may conceive that, after having seen all my family die in consumptions, I had some reason to think it was my turn. I indeed believed it; and, deprived of sleep, growing visibly thin, in short, finding myself declining, and concluding that the last period of the disease would soon announce itself by the customary symptoms, I resolved to employ honourably the little time I might have left, and thought only of selecting some literary subject that might fully possess my fancy, and which, after having occupied my last moments, might leave some worthy traces of me.

One of my friends had given me a print of Belisarius, after the picture from Van Dyck; it often attracted my notice, and I was astonished that poets had drawn nothing from a subject so moral and so interesting. I conceived the desire of treating it myself, in prose; and, as soon as this idea had seized on my fancy, my malady was suspended as by a sudden charm. Oh! marvellous power of imagination! The pleasure of inventing my fable, the care of arranging, of developing it, the impressive interest which the first sketch of the situations and scenes I meditated excited in me, all so dwelt on my mind, and so detached me from myself, as to render credible all that is related of extatic raptures. My lungs were oppressed, I breathed painfully; I had a most violent convulsive cough; and I forgot them all! I could scarcely perceive their existence. My friends came to see me, and spoke of my malady; I answered like a man absorbed in other meditations: I was thinking of Belisarius. My wakefulness, that till then had been so painful, had no longer its weariness, nor the torment of inquietude. My nights, like my days, were passed in contemplating the adventures of my hero. I did not exhaust myself the less; and this continual exertion would have completely extinguished me, if a remedy had not been found for my complaint. It was Gatti, a physician of Florence, a celebrated promoter of inoculation, skilful in his profession, and also a most engaging man, who called to see me, and saved my life. "It is only necessary," said he, "to dissolve that thick and glutinous humour, which impedes the action of the lungs; and the remedy is not unpleasant: you must drink plenty of oxymel." I only therefore diluted and mixed by the fire some excellent honey, and vinegar, and the salutary use of the syrup, formed by this mixture, cured me in a very short time. I had then been more than three months in the firm persuasion that I was dying; but, in those three months my work had advanced: the chapters that required historic studies were all that remained to be composed. All the labour of the imagination was finished; and this part was the most interesting.

If this work is of a graver character than my other writings, it is because, while composing it, I fancied that I was uttering my

last words, *nonnulla verba*, as the ancients used to say. I first tried what effect the reading of it would have on the mind of Diderot; and secondly on that of the hereditary prince of Brunswick, now the reigning duke. Diderot was highly pleased with the moral part; he thought the political too concise, and advised me to extend it.

The prince of Brunswick, who was then on his travels through France, after having made war against us with the loyalty of chivalry and the valour of a hero, enjoyed at Paris that high esteem which his virtues merited: a more flattering homage than the customary respect that is paid to men of his birth and rank. He was desirous of being present at a private sitting of the French academy, an honour that till then had been reserved for crowned heads. In that sitting I read an ample extract from *Belisarius*, and I had the pleasure of seeing the face of the young hero beam with animation; at the images that I presented to him, and the tears start into his eyes.

He was particularly fond of the society of men of letters, and you will presently see how highly he valued it. Helvétius invited him to dine with us; and he owned he had never made such a dinner in his life. I certainly did not merit to be remarked there; yet I was so. Helvétius having told the prince that he found a considerable likeness between him and the pretender, and the prince having answered that several persons had already made the same remark, I said in a half-whisper, "Had the likeness been somewhat more perfect, Prince Edward would have been king of England." These words were heard; the prince felt them; and I saw him blush at them from modesty and bashfulness.

I was very certain that the success which the reading of *Belisarius* had obtained, at the academy, would at least be equalled by the disapprobation it would excite, at the Sorbonne. But that was not what disturbed me; and, provided the court and the parliament did not interfere, I was willing enough to engage the theologians. I therefore took every precaution to have no enemies but them. The Abbé Terray was not yet in the ministry; but in the parliament, of which he was a member, he had the greatest credit. I went with Madame Gaubard, his female friend, to pass some time at his country-seat of la Motte, and there I read to him *Belisarius*. Although nature had given him but little sensibility, he shewed some at this reading. After I had interested him in my cause, I told him in confidence that I was apprehensive of some hostility, on the part of the Sorbonne, and asked him if he thought that the parliament would condemn my book, in case it should be censured. He assured me that the parliament would take no part in the affair; and he promised to be my defender, if any one should attack it there.

This was not all. I wanted it to be privileged, and to have an assurance that this privilege should not be revoked. I had no personal interest with old Maupeou, then keeper of the seals. But the wife of my bookseller, Madame Merlin, was acquainted with and patronised by him. I employed her to sound him, and he promised us all his favour. I remained for me to assure myself of

the Court, and here the perilous part of my book was not theology. I dreaded allusions, malicious applications, and the accusation of having thought of some other than Justinian, when I painted so feeble and deluded a monarch. Unhappily, there was but too much analogy between the two reigns; the king of Prussia felt it so forcibly that, after he had received my work, he wrote to me with his own hand, at the bottom of his secretary's (Decat's) letter: "I have just begun your *Belisarius*; you are very bold!" Others might say it; and had my enemies attacked me on that quarter, I had been ruined.

At the same time no direct precautions could be taken, in this respect. The least inquietude, shewn by me, would have given the alarm, and denounced me. No one would have dared to encourage, or promise me assistance; and the first counsel I should have received would have been to throw my book into the fire, or to efface from it all that could be susceptible of allusion; and how much must I have effaced!

I assumed an aspect that was the reverse of that inquietude. I wrote to the minister of the king's household, the Count de Saint-Florentin, to say that I was on the point of publishing a work, the subject of which seemed worthy to interest the heart of the king; that I was ardently desirous of his majesty's permission to dedicate it to him; and that, in giving it to him (the minister) to examine, I would intreat him in person to solicit this favour for me. For this purpose, I begged a moment's audience of the count; which he granted.

In confiding to him my manuscript, I confessed to him that there was one chapter with which fanatic theologians might probably be dissatisfied. "It is very much to my interest then," said I, "that this secret should not be disclosed; and I intreat you, count, not to suffer my manuscript to leave your closet." As he had some friendship for me, he readily gave me his promise, which he kept. But a few days afterward, returning me the book, which he had either read or had employed some one to read, he told me that the religion of Belisarius would not suit the taste of the theologians; that my work would probably be censured by them; and that, for that reason only, he dared not propose to the king to accept the dedication. On which I prayed him to keep my secret, and I withdrew contented.

What indeed was my object? To have at court a witness of the intention I had expressed of dedicating my work to the king; and, consequently, a proof that nothing was more distant from my thoughts than to write a satire on his reign; which was the simple truth. Armed with this defence, I was once more tranquil, on that side. But I had to pass under the eyes of a censor; and, instead of one, I had two given me; the literary censor not daring to take on himself to approve what regarded theology.

*Belisarius* was now submitted to the examination of a Doctor of the Sorbonne. His name was Chevrier. A week after I had delivered him my work, I called on him. In returning it to me, he was loud in its praises; but when I cast my eyes on the last sheet, I did not see his approbation there. "Have then the

kindness," said I, "to write two words there." His answer was a smile. "What! Sir," insisted I, "do you not approve it!"—"No, sir; God forbid!" answered he, mildly.—"And may I at least know what you find in it so censurable?"—"Very little in detail, but much on the whole; and the author knows too well in what spirit he has written his book, to require that I should affix my approbation to it." I pressed him to explain himself. "Nô, sir," said he, "you understand me perfectly; I understand you as well; let us not lose time by any discussion; but seek another censor." Fortunately I found one who was less difficult, and *Belisarius* was printed.

As soon as it appeared, the Sorbonne was in an uproar; and the wise doctors resolved, in full council, to subject it to their censure. To many people, this censure was a formidable thing; and several of my friends were of the number. The alarm spread among them. They advised me to appease, if it were possible, the fury of these doctors; other friends, more firm, more jealous of my philosophical honour, exhorted me not to bend. I encouraged both, told my secret to neither, and began by listening attentively to the public.

My book sold rapidly; the first edition of it was exhausted; I pressed the second, I hastened the third. There were nine thousand copies of it sold, before the Sorbonne had extracted from it what they had determined to censure; and, thanks to the noise these doctors made about the fifteenth chapter, no other was mentioned: it was formed like the tail of the dog of Alcibiades. I rejoiced to see how essentially they served me, by thus diverting attention. My part was to appear neither feeble nor mutinous, and to gain time, in order that the editions of my book might multiply and spread through Europe. I kept myself on the defensive, without the appearance of fearing the Sorbonne, or that of braving it, when an abbé, who has himself had powerful enemies to combat, the abbé Georgel, came to invite me to take the archbishop as a mediator; assuring me that, if I would call on him, I should be well received, and that he knew he was disposed to negotiate a pacific accommodation with the theologians in my behalf. Nothing could accord better with my plan than modes of reconciliation. I went to the prelate, who received me with a paternal air, calling me always, *My dear Mr. Marmontel*. I was touched with the kindness which these gentle words seemed to express. I have since learnt that it was his manner of being gracious, when he spoke to the lower class of the people.

I assured him of my good faith, of my respect for religion, of the desire I had not to leave any doubt concerning my doctrine, or that of my book, and I only asked him, as a favour, to be admitted to explain myself, before him and his doctors, on all the points which should appear culpable to them, in this work. The part of mediator and of conciliator seemed to please him. He promised me to act, and he bade me call on the syndic of the Sorbonne, Doctor Riballier, and explain myself to him.

I went to Riballier. Our conversations and my correspondence with him are printed; I refer you to them.

The other doctors, who were assembled by the archbishop at his own house, whither I went to confer with them, were somewhat less uncivil than Riballier. But, in our conferences, they too chose perpetually to change the passages, in order to prevent the sense. Armed with patience and moderation, I rectified the text, which they had altered, and explained to them my ideas, offering to insert these explanations in notes in my book; and the archbishop was well satisfied with me; but I cannot say the same of the other gentlemen. "All that you are telling us there is very useless," concluded at last the Abbé le Fèvre, an old caviller, who was only known in the school by the name of *le Grand Cateau*, you must absolutely erase the fifteenth chapter from your book; the venom is there."

"If what you ask of me were possible," answered I, "perhaps I should do it for the love of peace. But, at present, there are forty thousand copies of my work scattered over Europe; and, in all the editions that have been published, and that which will soon appear, the fifteenth chapter is printed, and always will be printed. What would it now avail, to publish an edition of it without this chapter? No one would buy it thus mutilated; it would be money lost to me and to my bookseller.—"Very well," said he, "your book shall be censured without pity.—"Yes, without pity, Mr. Abbé," I replied; "I expect no less, if it be you who are to direct the censure. But his Grace the Archbishop will be my witness that, to appease you, I have done all that you could reasonably require."

"Yes, my dear Mr. Marmontel," said the archbishop, "on many points I have been pleased with your good faith and docility. But there is one article of which I require from you an authentic and formal recantation; it is that of toleration."—"If your Grace," said I, "will be pleased to cast your eyes on a few lines that I have written this morning, you will there see, clearly explained, my personal opinion on that subject, and its motives." I presented to him the note that you will find printed at the end of *Belisarius*. He read it in silence, and passed it to the doctors. "Ah!" said they, "common-place arguments a thousand times repeated, a thousand times confuted, that are but the refuse of the schools."—"You treat with very great contempt," said I, "the authority of the fathers of the church, and that of St. Paul, by which my motives are supported." They answered, "that the writings of the fathers of the church were an arsenal, in which all parties found arms; and that the passage of Saint Paul, which I quoted, proved nothing."

"Well then," I replied, "since your authority only should be law, what do you ask of me?" "The right of the sword," they replied, "to exterminate heresy, irreligion, impiety, and bind all to the yoke of faith." I waited for them to come to that, in order to retire in good order, and intrench myself in a post where they could not attack me. *Præunitum, atque ex omni parte causæ septum*. (De Or. L. 3.) I answered, "that the sword was among those carnal weapons which Saint Paul had re-proved, when he had said—*Arma militiæ nostræ non carnalia*

sunt ;” and at these words I was going to withdraw. The prelate detained me, and, pressing my hands between his, conjured me, in a pathetic tone, that was truly laughable, to subscribe to that atrocious dogma. “No, my lord,” said I, “if I signed it, I should think I had dipped my pen in blood ; I should think I had approved all the cruelties committed in the name of religion.”—“You affix then,” said le Fèvre, with his doctorial insolence, “a great importance and a great authority to your opinion ?”—“I know, Mr. Abbé,” I replied, “that my authority is nothing ; but my conscience is something ; and it is that which, in the name of humanity, in the name of religion itself, forbids me to approve persecution. *Defendenda religio est, non occidendo, sed moriendo ; non sævitia, sed patientia. — si sanguine, si tormentis, si malo religionem defendere velis ; jam non defendetur, sed pollicetur atque violabitur.* This is the language of Lactantius ; it is that of Tertullian ; it is that of Saint Paul ; and you will allow me to think that they were at least your equals.”

“Come,” said he to his brethren, “let’s say no more. The gentleman chooses to be censured ; he shall be so.” Thus our conferences finished. What was precious to me was the result I had drawn from them. The question here involved no little theological chicanery, in which I should have been exposed to the cavils of the schools ; it was a point of controversy, reduced to the most simple, the most striking, the most precise terms. “They have wanted,” I could say, “to make me recognize the right of forcing belief, of employing for that purpose the sword, the torture, the scaffold, and the stake ; they have wanted to make me approve those who preached the gospel with the poignard in their hand ; and I have refused to subscribe to that abominable doctrine. It is for this that the Abbé le Fèvre has declared that I should be censured without pity. This recapitulation, which I was active in spreading about town, at court, in the parliament, and in the councils, rendered the Sorbonne odious ; at the same time my friends exerted themselves to make it ridiculous ; and for that I relied on them.

The first operation of the theologians had been to extract from my work the passages they meant to condemn. It was who should have the glory of discovering the greatest number of them. They picked them curiously, like pearls, that each was emulous of bringing to the magazine. After having collected thirty-seven of them, finding that number sufficient, they published the list under the title of *Indiculous*. Voltaire added to it the epithet of *Ridiculous*. Never did adjective and substantive agree better together ; *Indiculous*, *Ridiculous*, seemed made for each other ; they remained inseparable. M. Turgot exposed the folly of the doctors in another way. As he was a good theologian himself, and a still better logician, he first established this evident and universally acknowledged principle, that of two contradictory propositions, if one be false, the other is necessarily true. He then placed in opposition, in two parallel columns, the thirty-seven propositions reproved by the Sorbonne, and the thirty-seven con-



contradictory ones, very exactly enunciated. There was no medium, in condemning the former the theologians must absolutely adopt and profess the latter. Now, among these there was not a single one which was not revolting for its horror, or ridiculous for its absurdity. This beam of light, thrown judiciously on the doctrine of la Sorbonne, exposed it in its native deformity. In vain did they wish to withdraw their *Indiculus*; it was too late; the blow was struck.

Voltaire undertook to make game of the syndic Riballier, and his scribe Cogé, a professor at that same college Mazarin, of which Riballier was head-master, and who, under his direction, had written a slanderous libel against *Belisarius* and against me. At the same time, with that arm of ridicule which he handled so well, Voltaire fell with all his might on the whole Sorbonne; and his little sheets that arrived from Geneva and that circulated in Paris amused the public at the expense of the doctors. Some other of my friends, good reasoners, and good banterers, had likewise the charity to undertake my defence; so that the decree of the theological tribunal was dishonoured and scouted before it had appeared.

Whilst the Sorbonne, made still more furious by these vexations, was labouring with all its forces to render *Belisarius* heretical, deistical, impious, *the enemy of the throne and the altar* (for these were her great battle horses) I was receiving, on every side, letters from the sovereigns of Europe, and from the most enlightened and wisest men, full of eulogies on my work, which they called the breviary of kings. The empress of Russia had translated it into the Russian language, and had dedicated the translation to an archbishop of her country. The Empress Queen of Hungary, in spite of the Archbishop of Vienna, had ordered it to be printed in her states; she who was so severe with regard to those writings which attacked religion. I did not neglect, as you may suppose, to communicate this universal success to the court and to the parliament, and neither the one nor the other had any inclination to share the ridicule of the Sorbonne.

Circumstances being thus favourable to me, and my presence no longer necessary at Paris, I employed the time, which the doctors took to fabricate their censure, in the saintly duties of friendship.

Madame Filleul was dying of a slow fever, occasioned by an acrimonious humour in the blood, and for which the most skilful of our physicians, Bouvart, had prescribed the waters and baths of Aix-la-Chapelle. The young Countess de Séran accompanied her there; but, in the state in which the patient was, the assistance of a man was necessary to them. Their friend Bouret entreated me to be their companion. I considered it as my duty to oblige them; and, as soon as they learned my answer, Madame de Séran wrote me this note:

"Is it indeed true that you are going to the waters with us?  
 "No, I cannot believe it. It is the object of all my wishes; but  
 "I dare not make it the object of my hopes. Your occupations,  
 "your affairs, your pleasures, all combat my confidence. Assure

"me of it yourself, if you wish that I should persuade myself of it; and if you do assure me of it, believe me, I shall put this mark of friendship above all those that were ever given. Madame Filleul dares not flatter herself more than I. But you would perhaps be decided by the desire she shews for it, and the gratitude she expresses at it."

I set off with them. Madame Filleul was so ill, and Madame de Séran was so persuaded that she should see her friend die on the road, that she cautioned me to take mourning with me. Arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle with this courageous woman, who, with scarcely one breath of life, did not cease still to smile at the gaiety we affected, the physician of the waters was consulted: he found her too much enfeebled to support the bath, and began by making her try the waters very gently. The effect of their virtue was such, that the eruption of the humours having restored the patient to life, in a few days regained strength, and was capable of supporting the bath. A prodigious change was then operated, as by miracle. The eruption was complete over the whole body, and the fair patient, feeling herself re-animated, went alone, walked out, and made us admire the progress of her recovery, of her appetite, of her strength. Alas! in spite of our remonstrances and our prayers, she abused this prompt convalescence, by refusing to continue the gentle regimen that was prescribed her; still, in spite of her intemperance, she would have been saved, had it not been for the fatal imprudence she committed, without our knowledge, just as her recovery was completed.

M. de Marigny, whose sister was dead, and who, wishing to marry most agreeably to his taste and to his happiness, had united himself to the eldest daughter of Madame Filleul, the idol of us all, the beautiful, the witty, the charming Julie. Yielding to the desires his wife expressed of coming to see his mother, he brought her to us, and at the same time made, with the celebrated designer Cochin, a journey into Holland and Brabant, in order to see there the pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools.

I have painted to you the character of this worthy, interesting, and unhappy man. All the charms that can be wished for in a young woman, whether in person or in mind, disposition, sweetness, ingenuousness, kindness, gaiety, abundant wit, reason too, and most sound reason, all cultivated with the greatest care, were united in his young wife. But, tormented as he was by a melancholy self-love, he had scarcely married her when he chose to be jealous of the tenderness she had for her mother, and of the friendship that from her infancy had united her to Madame de Séran. He witnessed this mutual sensibility on seeing each other again; but he dissembled the vexation he felt at it, and the little time he passed with us was obscured by no cloud. He even expressed affectionate feelings for Madame Filleul. "I leave our dear Julie with you," said he to her. "It is very right that she should give some cares to the health of her mother. In a little time I shall return to take her back, and I hope I shall then find the health that is so precious to us all perfectly re-esta-

lished." He said some kind things too to the Countess de Séran, and he left us all persuaded that he went away tranquil. But in him the least grain of ill-humour was like a leaven that quickly fermented, and whose sourness communicated itself to the whole mass of his ideas. From the moment he was alone and abandoned to himself, he imagined his wife forgetting him by the side of her mother, and, more at liberty, rejoicing with us at her separation from him. "*She had no love for him; it was not for him she lived; he was far from being what was dearest to her on earth.*" such were the reflections that occupied his melancholy fancy. He had more than once confided the sad secret to me. Yet his letters were very kind during the whole of his journey, and, till his return, we perceived nothing of what was passing within him. Let us leave him on his travels, and speak a little of the life we led at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Although Madame Filleul, naturally lively, indulgent to her will and her appetite, did, in spite of us, all that could retard her recovery, the virtue of the waters and the baths did not cease to chase away again the new principles of acrimony with which she every day impregnated her blood, by spicy gravies, and ragoûts, whose seasoning was a real poison to her. As she boasted that she was cruel, we, without being so persuaded of it as herself, believed it enough to rejoice at it. Our ladies then partook of all the amusements of the waters. I shared with them. After dinner, walking was the amusement; in the evening, dancing at the assembly of the *Ridotto*, where there was deep play; but we did not game. The dances were all English, very pretty and very well danced. It is to me a curious sight to see those chains of men and women of all the northern nations, Russians, Poles, Germans, English above all, assembled and mixed together by the common attraction of pleasure. I need not tell you that two French women of rare beauty, the oldest of whom was but twenty, had only to shew themselves to attract attention and homage. In a morning then, while all were paying their court to them, either at home or on the public walk, I had some solitary hours. I employed them in literary labours. I wrote the *Incas*.

At that time two of our French bishops came to the waters, and were lodged in our neighbourhood. One of them, Broglie, bishop of Noyon, was sick; the other accompanied him; it was Marbœuf, bishop of Autun, who has since been minister. The author of the book which the Sorbonne was at that very moment censuring was an object of curiosity to them. They came to see me, and invited me to walk with them. I was well aware that these prelates wanted to wrestle with me; and, as the game pleased me, I willingly entered the ring.

The began, as you may suppose, by talking to me of Belisarius. They expected to find me terribly alarmed at the decree which the Sorbonne was about to fulminate against me, and they were quite surprised to see me so tranquil under this anathema. "Belisarius," said I to them, "is an old soldier, an honest man, and a Christian in his soul, loving his religion from his heart and with good faith; he believes all that the gospel teaches him,

and he only rejects what is not there. It is to the black phantoms of superstition, it is to the monstrous horrors of fanaticism, that Belisarius refuses his belief. I have proposed to the Sorbonne to render this distinction evident in explanatory notes, that I would add to my book. It has refused this method of conciliation; it has required that the fifteenth chapter should be expunged from a work of which forty thousand copies are already sold: a puerile demand; for the mutilated edition would have been rejected as refuse, and would only have ruined me. Lastly, it has insisted that I should recognize the dogma of civil intolerance, the right of the sword, the right of proscription, of exile, of dungeons, poignards, torture, and the stake, in order to force belief in the religion of the lamb; and in the lamb of the gospel, I have not chosen to recognize the tiger of the inquisition. I have adhered to the doctrine of Lactantius, of Tertullian, of Saint Paul, and to the spirit of the gospel. It is for this that the Sorbonne is actually occupied in fabricating a censure in which it will fall without pity on Belisarius, Lactantius, Tertullian, Saint Paul, and on all who think like them. Take care of yourselves, my lords, for it is possible that you may be of the number."

'But why do philosophers,' said the bishop of Autun to me, 'presume to speak of theology?' 'Why do theologians,' replied I, 'presume to tyrannise over mind, and to excite princes to employ torture in order to force belief? Are princes the judges on articles of religion and on the objects of faith?'—'Certainly not,' he answered; 'princes are not the judges.'—'And you make them the executioners?'—'I know not,' replied he, 'why theologians should now be accused of a kind of persecution which they no longer exercise. Never did the church shew more moderation in the use of its power.'—'It is true, my lord,' said I, 'that she uses it more soberly; she has tempered it, in order to preserve it.'—'Why then,' insisted he, 'choose this very time to attack her?'—'Because men do not write only for the moment in which they write,' answered I; 'it is to be feared that the future may resemble the past; and they seize the moment when the waters are low to work at the mounds.'—'Ah! the mounds! said he: 'tis the pretended philosophers who overturn them, and who aim at nothing less than the total destruction of religion.'—'Leave this charitable, this beneficent and peaceful religion its true character, I dare assert,' replied I, 'that incredulity itself will not dare to attack it, and that impiety will be silent before it. 'Tis not its pure tenets, nor its morality, nor even its mysteries that raise it enemies. 'Tis the violent and fanatic opinions with which a dark theology has mixed its doctrine; these are what make honest minds rebel. Let it be disengaged from this mixture; let it be purified; let it be brought back to its primitive sanctity; then will those who attack it be the public enemies of the wretched it consoles, of the oppressed it relieves, and of the feeble it supports.'

'Say what you will,' replied the bishop, 'its doctrine is steadfast; the edifice is cemented; and we will never suffer a single

stone of it to be displaced.' I reminded him, 'that the art of mining was carried to great perfection; that, with a little powder, very high and very solid towers had been completely overthrown, and even the hardest rocks blown in pieces. Heaven forbid,' added I, 'that I should wish my presage to be accomplished: I love sincerely, I revere from the bottom of my heart, this consoling religion; but, if ever it dies among us, theological fanaticism will alone be the cause of its death; fanaticism alone will have struck the mortal blow.'

Then retiring a little from me, and speaking in a low voice to the bishop of Noyon, I thought I heard him say, '*It will last longer than ourselves.*' He was mistaken. Turning again to me, 'if you love religion,' insisted he, 'why join with those who meditate its ruin?'—'I only join with those,' answered I, 'who love it as I do, and who desire that it should shew itself such as heaven gave it, pure, simple, and unspotted, *sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol.*'—He added smiling, '*terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.*'—'Yes,' replied I, 'terrible to the wicked; to the fanatic, to the impious; but terrible in futurity with the arms that are its own, and that are neither iron nor fire.' Such was nearly our first conversation.

Another time, as he perpetually recurred to his observation that philosophers gave themselves too much liberty: 'It is true, my lord,' said I to him, 'that they sometimes presume to perform very noble functions for you; but it is only when you will not deign to fulfil them yourselves.'—'What functions?' asked he.—'Those of preaching publicly truths that are too rarely told to sovereigns, to their ministers, or to the flatterers that surround them. Since the exile of Fenelon, or, if you will, since that little course of touching morality given to Lewis XV, when a child, by the direction of Masillon, lessons that were premature, and therefore useless, have public vices and public crimes found in the priesthood a single courageous assailant? In the pulpit, they dare indeed to rebuke little errors and check common frailties; but the disastrous passions, the political scourges; in a word, the moral sources of human evils, who dares to attack them? Who dares to encounter pride, ambition, vain-glory, false zeal, the fury of domination and usurpation? who dares call them to account before God and man, for the tears and blood of their numberless victims?' I then supposed a Chrysostom in the pulpit; and, in exposing the subjects that would invoke his eloquence, I was perhaps eloquent myself in that moment.

Be that as it may, may two prelates, after having felt my pulse two or three times, found my disease incurable; and when, one day, on shewing them upon my table the manuscript of the *Incas*, I said to them, 'There is a work that will redress your doctors to the alternative of burning the gospel, or of respecting, in Las-Casas, that apostle of the Indies, the same sentiments and the same doctrine that they condemn in Belisarius,' they saw that they could no longer hope any thing from me; thus their zeal discouraged, or rather their curiosity satisfied, left me the disposal of time that we were losing together; they in wishing to

make of me a philosophical theologian, and I in wishing to make of them theological philosophers.

The labour that my book of the Incas still required was interrupted for a little time to give place to that of a memorial in which I have pleaded the cause of the northern peasantry, and which is printed in the collection of my works.

I had just read, in the newspapers, that, at the economical society at Petersburg, an anonymous promoter of philosophical inquiry proposed a prize of a thousand ducats for the best work on this question: Is it advantageous to a state that the peasant should be a proprietor of land, or that he should only have moveable goods? and how far should the right of the peasant over this property extend, for the advantage of the state?

I concluded that this anonymous promoter of inquiry was the empress of Russia herself; and since, on this great object, she was desirous that the truth should be known in her states, I resolved to shew it whole and entire. One of the Russian ministers, M. de Saldern, had come to Aix-la-Chapelle to take the waters. I frequently saw him, and he spoke to me of the affairs of the north with as much openness of heart as a prudent minister is permitted to speak. It was through him that my memorial arrived at its destination. It did not obtain the prize; and I had foreseen it; but it made its impression, and I received testimonies of it. Thus my solitary hours were filled and usefully occupied. But an object not less interesting to me than my literary occupation, and, to say the truth, still more attractive, was the conversation of my three ladies, all three of different dispositions, but so analogous, that their colours harmonised and melted into each other like those of the rainbow. And in thoughts and sentiments thus harmoniously blended consists the charm of conversation. Unity of sentiment begins by being agreeable, and ends by being vapid. For this reason Madame Filleul used to say that she loved contrariety; that nothing else was natural and sincere; that nature had never made two things equal, neither two eggs, nor two leaves, nor two minds, nor two tempers, and that, wherever we thought we saw a perfect likeness of sentiments and opinions, there was dissimulation and complaisance on one side or the other, and often on both.

One of the three, Madame de Séran, had made me her confidant; and the secrets she confided to me were of such a nature as to make our private conversations very interesting. They related to the facility with which she might have succeeded Madame de Pompadour, had she been ambitious of that distinction. She was in continual correspondence with the king; he wrote to her by every post: and these letters and the answers were all shewn to me. I must tell you how this little romance was contrived.

Madame de Séran was the daughter of a M. de Buliond, a man of family, without fortune, and formerly governor of the pages of the Duke of Orléans. By a most strange fatality, and which I cannot explain, this young lady, from the age of fifteen, had been the object of her father's violent and sombre spleen, and

of her mother's aversion. Beautiful as an angel, and even more interesting for the charm of her gentle temper and of her simple innocence than for the brilliancy of her beauty, she did but weep and lament her sad and cruel fate, when her father suddenly resolved to marry her, giving her as her dowry his place of governor of the pages, which he resigned to his son-in-law. This husband whom he presented to her was likewise of an ancient family, but with no other property than a little estate in Normandy. To be poor was a trifle. M. de Séran was ugly, and of a most forbidding ugliness; red haired, ill made, with only one eye, and in that one a cataract; in other respects the best and most honourable of men. When he was presented to our beautiful Adélaïde, she turned pale with horror, and her heart shrunk back with disgust and repugnance. The presence of her relations made her rather conceal this first impression from him, as much as possible; but M. de Séran perceived it. He requested that he might be allowed to pass a few moments tête-à-tête with her; and when they were left alone, "Mademoiselle," said he to her, "you find me very ugly, and my ugliness frightens you. I perceive it; you may confess it without disguise. If you think that this repugnance is invincible, tell me so confidently as to your friend: your secret shall be kept; I will take the rupture on myself, and your parents shall know nothing of your confession. At the same time, if it were possible to render these natural defects supportable to you, in a husband, and if nothing were requisite for that purpose but the cares and attentive devotion of a sincere and tender friendship, you might expect them from the heart of an honest man, who would be grateful to you through life for not having rejected him. Consult your own feelings, and then answer me; you are perfectly free."

Adélaïde was so wretched, she saw in this honourable man so sincere a desire of procuring her a happier lot, that she hoped she should have the courage to accept him. "Sir," said she to him, "what I have just heard, the character of kindness, of probity, that your language announces, inspires me with the sincerest esteem for you. Give me a few hours for reflection, and come for your answer to-morrow."

Nothing less was requisite than the most urgent counsels of reason and misfortune in order to determine her; but the esteem she felt for M. de Séran at length triumphed over all her repugnance. "Sir," said she to him on seeing him again, "I am persuaded that ugliness, as well as beauty, is soon forgotten; and that the only qualities whose impression is not enfeebled by habit, and whose value is every day more intimately felt, are the qualities of the soul. I find them in you; I desire no others; and I confide to your honour the care of my happiness. It will be grateful to me to contribute to yours."

Thus Mademoiselle de Buliond was married before she had completed her fifteenth year; and M. de Séran was to her all that he had promised to be. I do not say that this union had the charm of love; but it had the sweets of peace, of friendship, and

of the tenderest esteem. The husband, without inquietude, beheld his wife surrounded by adorers; and the wife, by her correct and modest conduct, honoured in the eyes of the public the confidence of her husband.

Yet it was impossible to see her, to hear her, above all to know her, without wishing her a happier fate; her friends undertook to put her in the road to fortune; and on the marriage of Duke de Chartres, they thought of placing her honourably in the service of the young princess. But for that purpose a pure and noble race of ancestors did not suffice; it was necessary beside to be of the number of those ladies who had been presented to the king; such was the etiquette of the Court of Orléans. This honour was reserved to the families that had been noble, four hundred years, and by that title she had a right to aspire to it. It was granted her. But the king, after having listened more attentively to the eulogy of her beauty than to the testimonies of her rank, gave his consent, on condition that, after her presentation, she should go to thank him; a secret article for M. de Séran, and which his wife herself had not expected; for, very sincerely, she was only ambitious of the place that was promised her at the court of the Duke of Orléans; and when she had to go alone to the rendezvous the king gave her in his private apartment, to thank him tête-à-tête, I know that she was trembling. However, she went; and I arrived at Madame Filleul's as they were waiting her return. It was there that I learnt what I have just related; and I plainly saw that, as to her friends, the place at the Court of Orléans had been only a specious pretext, and that this rendezvous was their important object.

I had the pleasure of seeing them build their airy castles of ambition: the young countess all-powerful, the king and the court at her feet, all her friends loaded with benefits and favours, I myself honoured with her confidence, and through her exciting and persuading the king to do all the good I should desire; nothing could be finer. They were expecting the young and lovely conqueress, the minutes were counted, they were dying with impatience to see her enter, and yet they were very glad that she tarried still.

At last she returns, and tells us the history of her visit. A page of the chamber waited for her at the gate of the chapel; it was quite dark; she had gone up to the private apartment of the king by a back stair-case. He had not made her wait; he had approached her with an engaging air, had taken her by the hands, had kissed them respectfully, and, seeing her fearful, had encouraged her by gentle words and a look full of kindness. Afterward he had made her sit down opposite to him, had congratulated her on the success of her presentation, told her that nothing so beautiful had appeared at his court, and that all the world were of the same opinion. "It is then very true, sire, answered I," said she to us, "that happiness awaits us; and, if it be so, I ought to be still more beautiful at this moment."—"You are beautiful indeed," he replied, taking my hands and pressing them gently between his, that were trembling. After a moment's silence, in which his



eyes only spoke, he asked me what place I should be ambitious of obtaining at his court. I answered him: "the place of the princess d'Armagnac." She was an old friend of the king's, who was just dead. "Ah! you are very young," answered, he "to replace a friend who was present at my birth, who has held me on her knees, and whom I have loved from my cradle. Time is requisite, Madame, to gain my confidence. I have been so often deceived!"—"Oh! I will not deceive you," said I; "and if, to merit the distinguished title of your friend, time only be necessary, I have that to give you."—This language, in a girl of twenty, surprised but did not displease him. Changing the conversation, he asked me if I thought his private rooms tastefully furnished.—"I answered, no; that I should like them better in blue."—As blue is his colour, this answer flattered him. I added that, in every other respect, I thought them charming.—"If you be pleased with them," said he, "I hope you will sometimes return to them; for instance, every Sunday at this same hour." I assured him that I should seize every opportunity of paying my court to him. He then quitted me, to go and sup with his children. He has given me a rendezvous for next Sunday at the same hour. I therefore announce to you all that I shall be the friend of the king, and nothing more."

As this resolution was not only in her head, but in her heart, she kept it, and I had a proof of it. At the second rendezvous, she found the drawing-room furnished in blue, as she had wished it; an attention that was very delicate. She used to go there every Sunday, and through Janel, the postmaster-general, she frequently received, in the intervals between these private meetings, letters from the king; but in these letters, which I have seen, he never overstepped the bounds of a respectful gallantry; and the answers she made to them, full of wit, grace, and of delicacy, flattered his vanity without ever flattering his love. Madame de Séran had a fund of that natural and facile wit, whose ingenuousness and simplicity enchant those who have most of it, and please those who have least. The vanity of the king was not easily made gentle and familiar, yet it had soon been at its ease with her. After their first rendezvous, the time that preceded the royal supper had appeared to the king so short that he entreated her to have the kindness to wait his return, and to consent that a little supper should be served up to her, promising to abridge his own as much as possible, in order that he might pass a few moments longer with her. As he had a small library in this private apartment, she one evening asked him for some pleasant book to occupy her in his absence; and the king leaving the choice to her, she had the attention and kindness for me to name *Belisarius*. "I have it not," answered the king; "'tis the only one of his works that Marmontel has not given me.—"Choose then yourself, sire," said she to him, "some book that may amuse or interest me." "I hope," said he, "that this will interest you;" and he gave her a collection of verses written on his recovery. It was for her, after supper, an ample and rich fund of praise that was the more flattering, because wit had there made itself subservient to feeling.

Had the king been young, and animated by that fire that gives and excuses boldness, I would not have sworn that the young and prudent countess would always have passed without peril that slippery point, the tête-à-tête. But a feeble, timid, languid desire, such as it was in a man grown old by pleasures rather than by years, wanted to be encouraged; and an air of decorum, of reserve, and of modesty, was not what it required. Of this our young friend was well aware. "Therefore," used she to say, "he will never dare to be more than my friend. I am sure of it, and I have no inclination to recognize him by any other title."

One day, however, she spoke to him of his mistresses, and asked him if he had ever been really in love. He answered that he had, with Madame de Châteauroux. "And with Madame de Pompadour?"—"No," said he, "I never had any love for her."—"Yet you kept her as long as she lived."—"Yes, because, had I discarded her, it would have broken her heart." This ingenuousness was not very seducing. And Madame de Séran was thus never tempted to succeed a woman whom the king had kept only for pity's sake.

She was on these terms with him, when she and I both quitted every thing to accompany our sick and dying friend to the waters.

Madame de Séran regularly received by every courier a letter from the king, through the interposition of Janel; I was her confidant, and these letters were shewn to me; I saw the answers too; I enjoyed the same confidence during the whole of their correspondence; and I am an eye-witness of the chastity of this connection. The letters of the king were filled with expressions that left nothing equivocal. "You are but too respectable! . . . . Permit me to kiss your hands . . . .; at this distance at least, allow me to embrace you." He spoke to her of the death of the dauphin, whom he called *our saintly hero*, and told her that he wanted the consolations she would have offered to him at a loss so cruel. Such was his language; and he would not have had the complaisance to have disguised thus the style of a successful lover. I shall have occasion to speak again of these letters of the king, and of the impression they made on a mind less easy to persuade than mine. In the mean time, I observe here that the king, at his age, was sorry to have an opportunity of tasting the charms of sentimental love, which was the more inviting and flattering, because it was new to him, and because, without compromising his self-love, it touched him in the most delicate part.

Although the noise that *Belisarius* then made, and the celebrity that the *Moral Tales* had acquired in the north of Europe, might already have made me somewhat remarkable among the crowds in which I lived, an adventure, that was honourable enough for me, attracted to me new attention. One morning, in passing by the principal inn where the Ridotto was held, I heard some one call me by name. I raised my head, and saw at the window from which the voice proceeded, a man exclaiming, "*'tis he*," and disappear. I had not recognized him; but he instantly came out from the inn, ran up to me, and embraced me, saying, "What a

happy accident to meet you here!" It was the Prince of Brunswick. "Come," added he, "let me present you to my wife; she will be very happy to see you." And, on entering her room; "Madame," said he to her, "you were very desirous of knowing the author of *Belisarius* and of the *Moral Tales*. Here he is; I present him to you." Her royal highness, the sister of the king of England, received me with the same joy and the same cordiality with which the prince presented me. At that moment, the magistrates of the city were waiting for them at the fountain, in order to open it before them, and shew them the concretion of pure sulphur which was formed in stalactites under the stone of the reservoir; a kind of honour that was done only to people of the first distinction. "Go there without me," said the prince to his wife; "I shall pass the time more agreeably with Marmontel." I would have declined this favour; but I was obliged to remain with him, tête-à-tête, at least a quarter of an hour; and he employed it in talking to me with enthusiasm of the literary men he had seen at Paris, and of the happy moments he had passed with them. It was there he told me that the afflicting idea which our social intercourse had left on his mind was, that all hope of enticing us out of our country must be renounced, and that no sovereign in Europe was powerful enough to afford any compensation for the happiness of living together.

At last, to persuade him to go to the fountain, I was obliged to express a wish of seeing it myself; and I had the honour of accompanying him there.

As they were to leave Aix-la-Chapelle on the following day, the princess had the kindness to invite me to go and pass the evening with them at the *Ridotto*. At the moment I arrived she was dancing, and she instantly quitted the dance, of which she was passionately fond, to come and converse with me. Till one in the morning, she, her maid of honour (Mademoiselle Stuart) and I, kept ourselves in our corner, talking of all that this charming princess was desirous to know of me. It is possible that her kindness may have deceived me; but in her natural manner I found a vast deal of wit and charm. "How then have you been educated," I asked, "to have in your character that adorable simplicity! how little you resemble the persons I have seen of your rank!"—"It is because at your court," answered Mademoiselle Stuart, "princes are taught to govern, and at ours they are taught to please."

The princess, before she left me, had the goodness to request that I would promise her to make a journey to England while she herself should be there. "I will receive you," said she; "and it shall be I who will present you to the king, my brother." I promised her that, unless some insurmountable obstacle prevented me, I would go to pay my court to her in London; and I took leave of her and of her worthy husband, truly penetrated with the marks of kindness I had received from them. I was not the prouder for this favour; but in the circle at the *Ridotto* I thought I perceived that I was more respected. It seems, my dear children, that there is vanity in relating to you these details; but it is very

right that you should learn that, with some talent and polite and simple manners, you may every where command esteem.

Although Madame de Sérán and Madame de Marigny were not sick, they frequently indulged in the pleasure of bathing; and I used to hear them talk of their young bathing girl as of a model that sculptors would have been too happy to have for the statue of Atalanta, of Diana, or even of Venus. As I had a taste for the arts, I was curious to know the model they praised so highly. I went to see the young bathing maid. I found her beautiful indeed; and almost as prudent as beautiful. We became acquainted. One of her fair friends, who was soon mine, used to permit us occasionally to go with her and take some refreshment in her little garden. This humble society, in drawing me nearer to simple nature, furnished me with philosophy enough to keep my soul at peace in the company of my two young ladies; a situation that otherwise would not have ceased to be exceedingly painful. Besides, these little repasts were not expensive to me; some good little cakes, with a bottle of Moselle wine, were all they cost me; and Madame Filleul, whom I had admitted to my confidence, secretly gave me a few little flasks of Malaga that her bathing girl and I drank to her health.

Alas! that health which, in spite of all her intemperance, did not cease to improve by the marvellous virtue of the baths, soon experienced a fatal revolution.

M. de Marigny returned from his journey into Holland; he intended to take his wife back with him to Paris. But Madame Filleul having expressed to him the pleasure he would give her by leaving his daughter with her till the end of the bathing season, a period that was not distant, he appeared to yield willingly to the wishes of a sick mother; and, as he was desirous of seeing Spa on his return, our young ladies resolved to accompany him there; they all engaged me to take this little excursion with them. I know not what presentiment made me insist on keeping Madame Filleul company; but she herself persisting in wishing to be left alone, obliged me to go. This unfortunate journey announced itself ill. Two Polish gentlemen, who were acquainted with our young ladies, M. M. Regewski, thought it would be gallant to accompany them on horseback: M. de Marigny no sooner saw them galloping at the doors of the carriage than he fell into a sombre melancholy; and from that moment the cloud that arose in his head only blackened and became more stormy.

However, on arriving at Spa, he went with us to the assembly of the *Ridotto*; but, the more brilliant he found it, the more was he struck with the species of emotion that our young ladies had excited the instant they shewed themselves there, and the more gloomy was his chagrin. Yet he would not have the humiliation of shewing himself jealous. He chose a pretext more vague.

At supper, as he was melancholy and silent, Madame de Sérán and his wife having pressed him to say what was the cause of his sadness, he at last answered that he saw too well that his presence was importunate; that, after all he had done to be loved, he was not so; that he was hated; detested; that the request which Ma-

same. Filicul had made him was preconcerted; that they had accompanied him to Spa only to amuse themselves there; that he was not the dupe of this fair artifice, for he very well knew that his wife was longing for his departure. She spoke to him with gentleness, telling him he was unjust; that, if he had expressed the least objection to leave her with her mother, they would neither of them have felt any inclination to abuse his complaisance; that beside, though she had left her trunks at Aix-la-Chapelle, she was resolved to go with him; "No, Madame," said he; "stay; it is now too late; I desire no sacrifices."—"Most certainly," replied she, "it is a sacrifice to quit my mother in the state in which she is; but there is none that I am not ready to make to you."—"I will accept none," repeated he, rising from table. Madame de Séran wanted to try to appease him. "As to you, Madame," said he to her, "I do not speak to you. I should have too much to say to you. I only intreat you not to intermeddle with what passes between Madame Marigny and myself." He quitted the room abruptly, and left us all three in consternation. After a moment's consultation, we were of opinion that his wife should go to him. She was pale, and all in tears. In that situation, she would have moved the heart of a tiger; but he, for fear of being tamed, had commanded his servants not to suffer her to enter his room, and had ordered post-horses to be put to his chaise at the break of day.

No master was ever so punctually obeyed as he. His valet-de-chambre represented that, if he suffered Madame de Marigny to enter the room, he should be turned off instantly, and that his master, in his anger, would be capable of the greatest excesses. We hoped that sleep would calm him a little; and I only requested that they would come to inform me the instant he awoke.

I had not slept at all; I was not even undressed, when they came to tell me that he was getting up. I went to him, and in the most touching terms, I represented to him the state in which he was leaving his wife. "'Tis all pretence," said he; "you know nothing of women; I know them to my sorrow." The presence of his servant imposed silence on me; and when he was ready to get off: "Farewel, my dear friend," said he, pressing my hand; "pity the most wretched of men. Farewel." And with an air with which he would have mounted the scaffold, he got into his carriage and was driven off.

The grief of Madame de Marigny then changed into indignation: "He disgusts me," said she; "he wants to make me rebel, and he will succeed. I was disposed to love him, heaven is my witness; I would have made it my delight, my glory, to render him happy; but he will not be so; he has sworn to force me to hate him." We passed three days at Spa; the young ladies in dissipating the sadness that oppressed their hearts, and I reflecting on the melancholy consequences that this excursion might have. I did not foresee the still more cruel affliction it was to cause us.

In proportion as the blood of our patient was relieved from the impurities it contained, a slight scorbutic humour perpetually

formed itself on her skin and over her whole person; this humour dried of itself, and fell in dust. It was that which had saved her; and from the moment that the scum of the blood has thus spread itself over the surface of the body, the physician had considered her as recalled to life. But she, who was disgusted with this affection of the skin, and who found its cure too slow, wanted to accelerate it, and choosing for that purpose the time of our absence, she had plaistered her whole body over with cerate. The transpiration of this humour had instantly ceased; it had returned into the blood: and we found the patient in a more desperate state than ever. She wished to return to Paris; we brought her back with difficulty, and from that time she did but languish.

In order that she might repose on her journey, we came but a few leagues each day. At Liege, where we had slept, a man of a respectable appearance entered my room in the morning, and said to me, "Sir, I learnt yesterday evening that you were here. I am under great obligations to you. I come to thank you for them. My name is Bassompierre. I am a bookseller and printer in this city; I print your works; for which I have a great sale throughout Germany. I have already struck off four large editions of your *Moral Tales*; I am about the third edition of *Belisarius*."—"What! Sir," said I, interrupting him, "you steal from me the fruit of my labour, and you come to boast of it to me!"—"Oh!" replied he, "your privileges do not extend to us. Liege is a free town. We have a right to print all that is good; that is our trade. If you be not robbed in France, where you are privileged, you will still be rich enough. Do me, then, the favour to come and breakfast at my house. You shall see one of the finest printing-offices in Europe; and you will be pleased with the manner in which your works are executed there." To see this exhibition I went to Bassompierre's house. The breakfast that awaited me consisted of cold meats and fish. The whole family gave me a most friendly reception. I was at table between Bassompierre's two daughters, who, as they filled my glass with Rhenish wine, said to me; "Monsieur Marmontel, what are you going to do at Paris, where you are persecuted? Stay here; live at my father's; we have an excellent chamber to give you. We will take care of you. You shall compose quite at your ease; and what you may have written one day shall be printed the next." I was almost tempted to accept the offer. Bassompierre, to indemnify me for his larceny, made me a present of the little edition of Molière, which you are in the habit of reading: it costs me twelve hundred guineas.

At Brussels I had the curiosity to see a rich cabinet of pictures. The amateur who had formed it was (I believe) one Chevalier Vérulo, a melancholy and splenetic man, who, persuaded that a breath of air would be mortal to him, kept himself shut up in his room as in a box. His cabinet was only open to persons of distinction, or to famous connoisseurs. I had neither of these titles. But, after I had understood his character, I hoped to induce him to receive me favourably. I was introduced to him. "Be not surprised, sir," said I, "that a man of letters, who is acquainted at Paris with the most celebrated artists, and with the lovers of

the fine arts, should be desirous of having it in his power to give them news of a man for whom they all entertain the highest esteem. They will know that I have passed through Brussels, and they would not pardon my having been there without seeing you, and without having inquired after your health."—"Ah! sir," said he to me, "my health is very bad;" and entered into the details of his nervous complaints, of his vapours, of the extreme weakness of his organs. I listened to him, and after having well recommended to him to take care of himself, I was going to take my leave. "What! sir," said he, "will you go away without just casting your eyes on my pictures?"—"I am no connoisseur," I answered; "and I am not worth the trouble you would take to shew them to me." At the same time I suffered him to conduct me to his treasure; and the first picture that he bade me remark was a very beautiful landscape by Berghem. "Ah!" exclaimed I, "I at first took that picture for a window, through which I saw the country and those beautiful flocks."—"That," said he, with rapture, "is the finest eulogy that has been made on this picture." I expressed the same surprise and the same illusion on approaching a cabinet that contained a picture by Rubens, representing his three wives, painted as large as life; and thus, successively, I appeared to receive from his most remarkable pictures the impression of truth. He was indefatigable in renewing my surprises: I let him enjoy them as much as he chose; so that he at last told me that my instinct judged his pictures better than the acquired knowledge of many others, who called themselves connoisseurs, and who examined every thing, but who felt nothing.

At Valenciennes, a curiosity of another kind had nearly proved very unfortunate. As we had arrived early in that city, I thought I might employ the remainder of the evening in walking on the ramparts, to see the fortifications. While I was surveying them, an officer of the guard, at the head of his troop, came to me, and said, roughly, "What are you doing there? "I am walking and looking at these fine fortifications."—"Don't you know then that it is forbidden to walk on these ramparts and examine these works?"—"Certainly I did not know it."—"Where do you come from?"—"From Paris."—"Who are you?"—"A man of letters, who, having never seen a fortified place, but in books, was curious to see one in reality."—"Where do you lodge?" I named the inn, and the three ladies that I accompanied: I told my name too. "You have the appearance of being sincere," said he at last; "go back." I did not suffer him to repeat his command.

As I was relating my adventure to our ladies, the commandant of the town entered the room; luckily he had been particularly patronized by Madame de Pompadour, and he came to pay his respects to the sister-in-law of his benefactress. I found him acquainted with what had just happened to me. He told me that I might consider myself very fortunate that they had not put me in prison. But he offered to conduct me himself the next morning to see all the exterior of the place. I accepted his offer with

gratitude, and I had the pleasure of walking round the town, leisurely, and without danger.

A short time after our return to Paris, we had the misfortune to lose Madame Filleul. Never was a death more courageous and more tranquil. She was a woman of a very singular disposition, full of wit, and of a wit whose penetration, vivacity, and acuteness, resembled the look of the eagle; she had nothing that favoured either of trick or artifice. I never saw her indulge either in the illusions or in the vanities of her sex: she had its tastes, but simple, natural, without whim and without caprice. Her soul was lively, but calm; with feeling enough to be loving and beneficent, but not sufficient to be the sport of her passions. Her inclinations were gentle, peaceful, and constant; she indulged them without weakness, and never abandoned herself to them; she considered the occurrences of life, and the scenes they compose, as a game which she liked to see played, and at which, she said, it was necessary occasionally to know how to play ourselves, without being either knave or dupe: and it was so she conducted herself, with very little attention to her own interests, and great ardour for the interests of her friends. As to events, nothing astonished her; and in every situation she had the advantage of coolness and prudence. I have no doubt but that it was she who had put Madame de Séran in the road to fortune; but she only smiled at the ingenuousness of the young countess; when she heard her say that even in a king, were he king of the world, she never would have a lover whom she could not love. "You shall have kings made for you," she used to answer, "to the model of your love; you shall have intrigues in which there is nothing but enjoyment."—"Indeed," said the young countess, "you would all wish me to be all-powerful, that you might only have to ask me for whatever you desire; but while you would be amusing yourselves here, I should be sadly wearied in my elevated sphere, and should die with grief, like Madame de Pompadour."—"Well, my dear girl, let us be poor," said Madame Filleul to her; "in your place I should be as foolish as yourself;" and in the evening we ate our frugal supper gaily, laughing at human grandeur. Thus, without being concerned at the view and approach of death, she smiled on her friend as she bade her farewell, and life ended in a gentle swoon.

On my return from Aix-la-Chapelle, I found the censure of the Sorbonne pasted up at the door of the academy, and at that of Madame Geoffrin. But the Swiss of the Louvre seemed to have agreed to wipe their brooms against it. The censure and the mandate of the archbishop were read from the pulpit in all the churches of Paris, and they were despised by every class of people. Neither the court nor the parliament had taken any part in this business. I was only counselled to be silent, and Belisarius continued to be printed and sold with the privilege of the king. But an event more afflicting than the degrees of the Sorbonne awaited me at Maisons; and when I arrived it was there that I needed all my courage.



I have mentioned a young niece of Madame Gaulard, and the pleasant habit I had had of passing with them the gay seasons of the year, sometimes even the winters. This habit, between the niece and me, was changed into love. We were neither of us rich; but, with the credit of our friend Bouret, nothing was more easy than to procure for myself, either at Paris or in the provinces, some place lucrative enough to provide us with every comfort we desired. We had confided our desires and our hopes to no one. But from the liberty we were allowed together, from the tranquil confidence with which Madame Gaulard herself observed our intimacy, we did not doubt but that she would be favourable to us. Bouret above all seemed to be so pleased to witness our friendship, that I thought myself sure of him; and as soon as I should have brought back to him his intimate friend in good health, as I hoped I should do, I intended to engage him to occupy himself with my fortune and my marriage.

But Madame Gaulard had a cousin whom she tenderly loved, and whose fortune was made. This cousin, who was also that of the young niece, fell in love with her, asked her in marriage during my absence, and obtained her without difficulty. She, too young, too timid to declare any other attachment, so far engaged herself, that I arrived only to be present at the ceremony. They were waiting for a dispensation from Rome to go to the altar; and I, as the intimate friend of the house, was to be the witness and confident of all. My situation was painful; that of the young lady was scarcely less so, and, however tranquil we had resolved to appear, it is difficult to me to conceive that our sadness did not betray us to the eyes of the aunt and of the future husband. Happily the liberty of the country permitted us to say to each other a few consoling words, and mutually to inspire each other with the courage we so much wanted. In such a case, love in despair saves itself in the arms of friendship: that was our refuge. We promised each other therefore at least to be friends through life; and while our hearts were suffered thus to offer mutual comfort, we were not unhappy. But till the fatal dispensation should arrive from Rome, it was prudent that I should absent myself; and I had a favourable opportunity for so doing.

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## BOOK IX.

M. De Marigny, at peace with his wife, abridged his visit to Fontainebleau, in order to go with her to Ménars. He was desirous that I should accompany them. His wife intreated it of me still more earnestly than he. As the confidant of their disputes,

I hoped to be able to contribute to their reconciliation: and my gratitude to him, as much as my friendship for her, prompted me to accept their offer. "You cannot think, sir," said he in his letter from Fontainebleau of the 12th of October, 1767, "what pleasure you give me by going to Ménars. I may be permitted to be a little jealous of that which Madame de Marigny expresses at it."

My presence was not useless to them in this journey. More than one cloud was raised between them, which it was requisite to dissipate. Even on the road, while speaking in praise of his wife, M. de Marigny wanted to attribute her faults to the Countess de Séran. But his young wife, who had some dignity, refused to admit that excuse. "I have committed no faults that should affect you," said she, "and you are unjust to attribute any to me; but you are still more so to load my friend with them." And when a few words, that were too bitter, and too inconsiderate, escaped him against this absent friend, "Respect her, sir," said his wife to him, "you owe it to her; you owe it to me; and I must tell you that you will never abuse her without wounding me to the heart."

It is true that, in the intimacy of these two women, all the care of Madame de Séran was employed in inspiring her friend with gentleness, complaisance, and, if it were possible, with love for a man who, she told her, had amiable qualities, and who, if his violence were tempered, and his sourness sweetened, would make a very good husband.

A little force and dignity was very necessary with a man who, possessed of frankness and courage, esteemed in the characters of others what was analogous to his own. The tone we observed with him therefore was that of mild but firm reason: and I fulfilled so well my office of conciliator, that, on quitting them, I left them in perfect harmony. But I had seen enough of them, and above all I had learnt enough from the confidential conversations of his young wife, to be decidedly of opinion that they might esteem but could never love each other.

In the following spring, I went with them again into Touraine. In this journey I had the pleasure of seeing M. de Marigny completely reconciled with Madame de Séran; except a few moments of sour jealousy at the intimacy of the two ladies, he was amiable enough between them. With respect to me, he was so pleased to have me as a mediator, that he offered me, as a pure gift, for my life, a neat country house near Ménars. A little grove, a garden, a rivulet of the purest water, a delicious retreat, seated on the banks of the Loire; nothing could be more seducing: but this gift was a chain; and I would wear none.

On my return, I went to Maisons. That was the retreat which had such charms for me; I loved all who dwelt in it; and I flattered myself that I was beloved by them. I could not have been more free nor more at my ease in my own house. If my friends wished to see me, they came to Maisons, and were welcomed there. The Count de Creutz was he who took most pleasure in

visiting us, and whose society we most relished, because, with the rarest qualities of the mind, he was simple and good.

Our walk usually extended to a little wood near Alfort; and there we reposed ourselves in its shade. His soul would then expand and unfold itself with me. The sensibility which he delighted to indulge, the pictures that the observation and study of nature had traced in his memory, and of which his imagination was, as it were, a rich and vast gallery; the high conceptions that meditation had inspired in him, and which his mind poured abundantly into mine, whether he spoke of politics or of morality; of men or of things, of sciences or arts, kept me whole hours attentive, and in a kind of enchantment. His country and his king, Sweden and Gustavus, the objects of his idolatry, were the two subjects of which he spoke with most eloquence and with most rapture. The enthusiasm with which he lavished praises on them would so seize on my mind, and my senses, that I would willingly have followed him beyond the Baltic.

One of his most passionate tastes was music, and beneficence was the soul of all his other virtues.

One day he came to conjure me, in the name of our friendship, to extend my hand to a young man who, he said, was in despair; and on the point of sinking, if I did not save him. "He is a musician," added he, "full of talent, and wants only a lively comic opera to make his fortune at Paris. He comes from Italy: he has made some essays at Geneva. He arrived with an opera taken from one of your tales (*les Mariages Samnites*): the directors of the opera-house have heard it, and they have refused it. The unhappy young man is without any resource; I have advanced him a few guineas; I can do no more; and, as a last favour, he has intreated me to recommend him to you."

Before that period I had done nothing that approached the idea I thought I had conceived of a French poem suited to Italian music; I did not even believe that I had the talent for it; but, to please the Count de Creutz, I would have undertaken impossibilities.

I had on my table, at that moment, one of Voltaire's tales (*L'Ingénu*); I thought it might furnish me with the ground-work of a little comic opera. "I will try," said I to the Count de Creutz, "whether I can adapt it to the stage, and draw from it feelings and situations favourable to vocal music." "Come again in a week, and bring this young man with you." The half of my poem was written when they arrived. Grétry was transported with joy at it; and he went to begin his work whilst I was completing mine. *Le Huron* had brilliant success; and Grétry, more modest and more grateful than he has since been, thinking that his reputation was not yet sufficiently established, solicited me not to abandon him. It was then that I composed *Lucile*.

From the still greater success of this last piece, I perceived that the public were disposed to relish theatrical compositions of a character analogous to that of my *Tales*; and with a musician and actors capable of expressing what I conceived, seeing that I could form pictures whose colouring and shades would be faith-

fully represented, I felt a very lively charm in this species of creation; for I can say that, in restoring the comic opera, I gave it a new character, and created a new species of it. After *Lucile* I wrote *Sylvain*; after *Sylvain*, *L'Ami de la Maison*, and *Zémire and Azor*; and our mutual successes increased with every new exertion. No kind of composition ever afforded me purer enjoyment. My choicest actors, Clairval, Caillot, Madame la Ruette, were the chiefs of their theatre. Madame la Ruette used to invite us to dinner. There I read my poem, and Grétry sang his music. Both being approved in this little council, all was prepared for the representation of the piece, and, after two or three rehearsals, it was played.

The sincerity of our actors, with respect to us, was perfect: whether for character or song, they knew exactly what would suit them; and their presentiment of effect was more infallible than our own. For my part, I never hesitated to submit to their opinions; sometimes they even accused me of submitting too readily. For instance, in the interval between *Lucile* and *Sylvain*, I had finished a comic opera in three acts, taken from my tale of *Le Connoisseur*. I read it to the little committee. Grétry was charmed with it, Madame la Ruette and Clairval applauded; but Caillot was cold and silent. I took him aside. "You are not satisfied," said I; "speak to me openly: what do you think of the piece you have just heard?"—"I think," said he, "that it is only a diminutive of the *Métromanie*; that the ridicule of fine affected wit is not poignant enough for a pit like ours, and that your work may possibly be unsuccessful." Then returning to the fire, round which the company were sitting: "Madame, and you, Gentlemen," said I, "we are all fools; Caillot alone is right;" and I threw my manuscript into the fire. They cried out that Caillot had made me act like a very madman. Grétry wept for sorrow, and, in going away with me, he appeared so disconsolate, that, on quitting him, I felt my heart oppressed with sadness.

The eagerness to deliver him from the state in which I had seen him having prevented sleep, the plot and first scenes of *Sylvain* were the fruit of the night's meditation. I was writing them in the morning when Grétry entered my room. "I have not closed my eyes all night," said he.—"Nor I neither," answered I. "Sit down and listen to me." I read him my plot and two scenes. "For effect," added I, "I am sure of my work, and I'll answer for success." He seized on the two first airs, and went away comforted.

It was thus I employed my leisure; and the produce of a light labour augmented every year my little fortune. But it was not so considerable as to induce Madame Gaulard to think it a suitable establishment for her niece: she therefore gave her another husband, as I have told you; and that society, which I had cultivated with so much care, was soon dissolved. Another incident threw me into other company.

It was natural that the adventure of *Belisarius* should have cooled in some degree Madame Geoffrin's friendship for me, and

that, as she was more ostensibly turned to devotion, she should have some repugnance to lodge a censured author in her house. As soon as I could perceive it, I pretended to wish for a more commodious apartment. "I am very sorry," said she, "that I have nothing better to offer you; but I hope that, though you cease to live in my house, you will not cease to be of the number of my friends, and of the dinners that unite them." After this audience of leave, I hastened to remove; and a lodging that exactly suited me was offered me by the Countess de Sérán, in a hotel which the king had given her. This leads me to resume the thread of her romance.

At her return from Aix-la-Chapelle, the king had received her better than ever, without daring more. At the same time, the mystery of their rendezvous and private meetings had not escaped the vigilant eyes of the court; and the Duke de Choiseul, resolved to remove from the king every woman whose confidence he did not enjoy, had indulged in some light offensive raillery against her. As soon as she was told of it, she determined to impose silence on him. La Borde, the court banker, devoted to the Duke de Choiseul, to whom he owed his fortune, was her friend. It was at his house and before him that she had an interview with the minister. "I have a favour to ask of your Grace," said she; "but first I wish to engage you to do me justice. You speak very slightly of me: I know it; you believe that I am one of those women whose ambition is to possess the heart of the king, and to assume over his mind an authority of which you are jealous. I could have revenged myself for the licence you have taken; I prefer to undeceive you. The king expressed his desire to see me; I did not refuse to gratify this desire: we have had private conversations and a diligent correspondence. All this you know; but what you do not know, the letters of the king shall teach you. Read; you will there see an excess of kindness; but as much respect for me as tenderness, and nothing at which I ought to blush. I love the king," added she; "I love him as a father; I would give my life for him; but, king as he is, he will never persuade me to deceive him, nor to disgrace myself by granting him what my heart cannot and will not give him."

The Duke de Choiseul, after having read the letters she had given him, would have thrown himself at her feet. "Pardon me, Madame," said he, "I am to blame, I confess, for having trusted too much to appearances. The king is very right: *you are but too admirable*. Now, tell me what you ask, and what service can be rendered you by a new friend whom you have just engaged for life."

"I am," said she, "on the point of marrying my sister to a worthy officer. Neither my relations nor myself are able to give her a dowry."

"Well, Madame," replied he, "the king must undertake to provide a dowry for your sister; and I will go and obtain for her, on the royal treasury, an order for eight thousand pounds."

"No, my lord, no: neither my sister nor I will accept money

that we have not earned, nor ever shall earn. What we ask for is a place that M. de la Barthe has merited by his services; and the only favour that we solicit is that he may obtain it in preference to other officers, who might have the same right as himself to pretend to it and to enjoy it." This favour was easily granted her. But all that the king could induce her to accept of for herself was the present of this little hôtel, in which she offered me an apartment.

When I was on the point of fixing myself there, I found myself obliged to prefer another place. The incident that determined me was this.

My old friend, Mademoiselle Clairon, having quitted the theatre, and taken a commodious house by the Pont-Royal, wished me to live with her. She knew of the engagement I had formed with Madame de Séran; but as she was acquainted with her kindness and sensibility, she called upon her without my knowledge, and, with her theatrical eloquence, she related to her the indignities she had endured from the gentlemen of the king's chamber, and the brutal ingratitude with which the public had repaid her services and her talents. In her solitary retreat, her gentlest consolation would have been to have had her old friend with her. She had a convenient apartment to let to me; she was very sure that I should accept it, if I had not engaged to occupy that which the countess had the kindness to offer me. She entreated her to be generous enough to break this engagement herself, and to insist on my lodging at her house. "You, Madame," said she, "are surrounded by every species of happiness, and I have none now but that which I can find in the constant and intimate society of a true friend. For pity's sake do not deprive me of it."

Madame de Séran was touched with her entreaty. She suspected me of having given my consent to it; I assured her that I had not. Indeed, the lodging which she had prepared for me, so conveniently situated, would have been more agreeable to me; I should have been more at liberty, and at three steps from the academy. This proximity alone would have been of inestimable value to me in wintery weather, when I should have the bridge to cross, if I lodged at Mademoiselle Clairon's. I had therefore no difficulty in persuading Madame de Séran that, in every respect, it was a sacrifice that was asked of me. "Well," said she, "you must make this sacrifice: Mademoiselle Clairon has claims on you that I have not."

I went therefore to live in the house of my old friend; and from the first day I perceived that, with the exception of a little chamber backward, my apartment was uninhabitable for a man of study, on account of the infernal noise of the carriages and carts in mounting the bridge, that was directly at my ear. It is the most frequented passage for the stone and wood that are brought to Paris. Thus, day and night, without intermission, the grinding of the pavement of a steep ascent under the wheels of these carts and under the feet of the unhappy horses that only drew them

along by climbing, the frightful cries of the carters, the piercing cracks of their whips, realised to me what Virgil says of Tartarus :

Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonare

Verbera : hinc stridor ferri, tractæque catenæ.

But, however afflicting this inconvenience was to me, I took no notice of it to my fair neighbour ; and if it were possible to be recompensed for it, by the charms of the most engaging and best chosen society, I was so the whole time that she and I inhabited that house.

She often received visits from the Duchess de Villeroy, the daughter of the Duke d'Aumont, and who, while her father persecuted me, had shewn the liveliest regret at seeing him unjust, and herself unable to soften him.

One evening, when she had just quitted my fair neighbour, I was surprised to hear the latter say to me, " Well, Marmontel, you would never tell me who was the author of the parody of *Cinna* : I know it at last ;" and she named Cury (at that time Cury, his mother and his son were dead). " And who told you ? said I, with surprise. "— " A person who knows very well the Duchess de Villeroy. She has just left me ; and you have been the object of her visit. Her father requests to see you. "—" Me ! her father ! the Duke d'Aumont ! "—" Me ! her father ! the Duke d'Aumont ! "—" He wishes to consult you on the plays that he is charged to give to the court on the marriage of the dauphin. " " But my father," said she, " would wish that Marmontel should say nothing of the past. "—" Assuredly" answered I, " Marmontel will not mention it to him : but has your father nothing to say to him on the regret he must feel at having been so cruelly unjust to him ? for, I can answer for it, he was most truly so. "—" I know it very well," said she, " and my father knows it too. The parody of *Cinna* was Cury's. La Ferté has told us so ; he had heard him read it to him ; but so long as that unhappy man lived, he had not chosen to betray him. "

I was obliged to acknowledge the truth of what La Ferté had said, and curious to see what countenance this man, condemned by his own conscience, would assume in my presence, I accepted the interview, and went to his house.

I found him with that same La Ferté, intendant of the *Menus-plaisirs*, examining on a table the plan of a fire-work. As soon as he saw me enter, he dismissed La Ferté ; and with a vivacity that disguised his disorder, he conducted me into his chamber. There, with a trembling hand, he advances a chair, and with a hasty, officious air, invites me to sit down. The Duchess de Villeroy had told Mademoiselle Clairon that for the fêtes of the court her father was very much embarrassed. These words recurred to me ; and to induce conversation, " Well, my lord duke," said I, " are you so very much embarrassed ? " At this beginning I saw him turn pale ; but I fortunately added, " for the plays you are to give the court. " And he recovered from the painful oppression that my first equivocal words had caused him. " Yes," said he, " very much embarrassed ; and I should be obliged to you, if you would aid

me to conquer this difficulty." He prated a vast deal on the pain and anxiety of such a commission; we looked over the repertories of the theatres; he appeared pleased with my counsels, and finished by asking me, if, among my manuscripts, I had not some new work of my own. He had heard of *Zémire and Azor*, he begged me to read it to him; I consented, but to him alone. This was the object of a second tête-à-tête; but as his erudition extended to the *Fairy Tales*, having recognized in my subject that of *Beauty and the Beast*, "It is impossible for me," said he, "to give this piece on the marriage of the dauphin: it will be taken for a satire." It was he who had made it; and I kept his satire secret. What is remarkable in our two conversations is, that his feeble and vain soul had not the courage to testify any regret for the injustice he had done me, nor the most sterile desire of having some opportunity of repairing it.

At that time the prince royal of Sweden made a journey to Paris: he had already conceived a lively affection for the author of *Belshazzar*, and had been pleased to correspond with me. He requested that he might see me often and in private. I paid my court to him; and when he learned the death of the king his father, I was the only foreigner he received in the first moments of his grief. I can say that I have seen in him the rare example of a young man prudent enough to be sincerely and profoundly afflicted at being a king. "What a misfortune," said he, "to find myself, at my age, charged with a crown and with an immense duty that I feel myself incapable of fulfilling! I was travelling to acquire the knowledge I wanted, and my travels are suddenly interrupted; I am obliged to return without having had time to inform my mind, or to see and study men; and with them, all intimate commerce, all faithful and secure correspondence is henceforth denied me. I must bid an eternal farewell to friendship and to truth—"No, Sire," answered I, "truth only flies from kings who reject and will not hear it. You love it; it will follow you; the sensibility of your heart, the frankness of your character, render you worthy of friendship: you will always have friends."—"Men scarcely ever have any; kings never," replied he—"Here is one," said I, shewing him the Count de Creutz, who was reading some dispatches in a corner of the room, "who will never prove faithless."—"Yes, he is one," answered he; "and I depend on him; but he will not be with me; my affairs oblige me to leave him here."

This little dialogue gives an idea of my conversations with this young prince, with whom I was every day more charmed. After having heard some readings of the *Incas*, he requested, through his minister, a manuscript copy of it; and afterwards, when the work was printed, he permitted me to dedicate it to him.

In that same year I made a very pleasant visit to Croix-Fontaine, but which ended by being very unfortunate for me. A putrid fever, of perilous malignity, raged all along that side of the Seine. At Saint-Port and Sainte-Assise, many persons had died of it; and at Croix-Fontaine, a great number of servants were attacked. Those who had not caught it waited on their comrades: mine did



not spare himself in the service ; and I myself used to go very often and visit the sick, an act of humanity vainly bestowed. However, I believed myself still in perfect health, when I received a letter from Paris desiring my attendance at the academy, for the reception of the archbishop of Toulouse, an assembly that the king of Sweden was to honour with his presence.

The day after my arrival at Paris, I felt myself, as it were, exhausted ; yet I went to the assembly of the academy ; I even read there some detached parts of my work of the Incas, but in a half-extinguished voice, without expression and without vigour. I had some success ; but my friends perceived with concern that I was very faint and feeble. In the evening the fever seized me. My servant was attacked at the same time, and we were both forty days between life and death. It was the first malady of which Bouvart cured me. He paid me all the attention of a tender friend. And Mademoiselle Clairon, during my recovery, gratified me with the most affecting cares : she used to read to me ; and the reveries of the thousand and one nights were all that my feeble brain could endure.

A little time afterward, the academy lost Duclos ; and on his death the place of historiographer of France was given me, without any solicitation on my part. I must tell you to whom I was indebted for this favour.

While I still lodged at the house of Madame Geoffrin, a man whom I had often met at Mademoiselle Clairon's, and whom I esteemed for his loyalty and frankness, Garville, called on me and said : " In the excursions I used to make into Brittany, while the Duke d'Aiguillon commanded there, I frequently saw him, and had an opportunity of knowing him. I am informed and convinced that the law-suit which is instituted against him is but intrigue and cabal ; but, however good his cause may be, so great is the credit of the states and of the parliament of Brittany, that even at Paris he can find no one to be his advocate. The only counsellor who has dared to undertake his defence is an adventurer in despair, a young man whose talent is not formed, but who boldly courts fortune. His name is Linguet. He has written a memorial, with which the duke is very much dissatisfied. It is a high-flown declamation, a deformed mass of phrases ridiculously figurative ; it is impossible to publish so unseemly and so absurd a composition. The duke has expressed to me the concern it gave him. I have advised him to have recourse to some man of letters. ' Men of letters,' said he, ' are all prejudiced against me ; they are my enemies.' I answered him, that I knew one who was the enemy only of injustice and falsehood, and I named you. He embraced me, saying that I should render him the greatest service if I engaged you to prepare his memorial. I come to beg this favour of you, to conjure you to it in his name."—" Sir," said I to Garville, " my pen will never refuse to plead a good cause. If that of the Duke d'Aiguillon be such as you represent it, he may depend on me. Let him confide his papers to me. After having read them, I will tell you more positively whether I can assist him. But tell him that the same zeal, which I shall employ in his defence, would

be as willingly exerted to defend the lowest of the people who should choose, under similar circumstances, to solicit it; and, in acquitting myself of this duty, I shall insist on two conditions: one, that the utmost secrecy shall be observed; the other, that it shall never be a question, from him to me, either of thanks or of gratitude: I will not even see him."

Garville faithfully reported to him this answer; and the next day he brought me his memorial with his papers. In these papers I thought I really perceived that the process, which was instituted against him, was only a persecution excited by personal animosity. As to the memorial, finding it such as Garville had represented it to me, I cast it anew. In preserving all that was reasonably good, I introduced into it order and clearness. I removed the rubbish of a style full of incoherent metaphors, and I substituted the language of nature. The details being thus corrected, the memorial assumed a more welcome form; for its style, above all, was shocking and ridiculous. At the same time I added to it something of my own: such as the exordium, in which Linguet had expressed himself with an impertinent arrogance; and the conclusion, in which he had neglected to collect the forces of his proof and his arguments.

When the Duke d'Aiguillon saw my corrections, he was highly pleased with them. He sent for Linguet: "I have read your memorial," said he; "and I have made some alterations in it, which I beg you to adopt." Linguet read it in its new form, and boiling with rage, "no, my lord duke," said he, "no, it is not you, it is a man of the profession who has transformed my work. You have done me a mortal injury; you want to dishonour me. But I am no man's scholar; no man has the right to correct me. I sign only my own work, and this work is not mine. Seek some other advocate who will plead your cause; you must no longer reckon on me." And he was going away. The Duke d'Aiguillon prevented him. He saw himself at his mercy; for no other counsellor would sign his memorials. He permitted him then to frame this to his will. All the pages which I had written were suppressed. Linguet himself re-wrote the exordium and the conclusion; but he left unimpaired the order which I had introduced into all the rest; he re-established none of the extravagancies of style which I had effaced; and thus, in rejecting my labour, he profited by it. However, he could not rest till he had discovered the author of the corrections made in his memorial; and, from the moment the secret was told to him, I know not by whom, he became my most cruel enemy. A periodical paper, which he afterward published, was swelled with the venom of the rage with which he used to foam at my name.

As for the Duke d'Aiguillon, he was perfectly sensible of the improvement I had made in his memorial, in spite of his lawyer; and he pressed Garville to take me to his house, that at least, as he said, he might have the satisfaction of thanking me himself. After having refused his invitations for a long time, I at last yielded, and went once to dine with him. From that time I had never seen him, when I received from him the following note. "I have

just solicited for you, of the king, sir, the place of historiographer of France, vacant by the death of M. Duclos. His majesty has granted it, and I hasten to announce it to you. Come and thank the king."

This mark of favour, the motive for which was unknown, silenced my enemies at court; and the Duke de Duras, who had not the same scruple about *Beauty and the Beast* that the Duke d'Aumont had expressed, requested me, in 1771, to give *Zémire and Azor* to the theatre at Fontainebleau. It met with the most unbounded success; but it was not without having run the risk of being treated with contempt. *L'Ami de la Maison*, which was given the same year at that theatre, was very coldly received there. As soon as I had felt and understood the cause of it, I applied its remedy, and at Paris it had as much success as *Zémire and Azor*. These are mere trifles; but, as they have interested me, they will likewise have some interest for my children.

When *Zémire and Azor* was announced at Fontainebleau, the current report was, that I had introduced on the stage the story of *Beauty and the Beast*, and that the principal character would be on all fours. I suffered the public to talk, and I was tranquil. I had written very detailed instructions for the dresses and decorations. But neither the taylor nor the decorator had given themselves the trouble to read what I had written; and all their dispositions were made after the story of *Beauty and the Beast*. My friends were uneasy about the success of my piece; Grétry looked disconsolate; Clairval himself, who had so readily played all my other parts, expressed some repugnance at the idea of playing this. I asked him the reason of it: "How can you expect," said he, "that I should render interesting a character in which I shall be hideous?"—"Hideous!" answered I, "you will not be at all so. You will be frightful at first sight; but in your ugliness you will have dignity and even grace."—"Go then," said he, "and look at the beast-like dress they are preparing for me; for I am told it is horrible." The piece was to be played the next day; there was not a moment to lose. I asked to see the dress of Azor. I had great difficulty in obtaining of the taylor this complaisance. He bade me be easy, and rely on him. But I insisted; and the Duke de Duras, in ordering him to conduct me to the magazine, had the kindness to accompany me. "Shew," said the taylor disdainfully to his workmen, "shew the gentlemen the dress of the beast." What did I see! a close vestment for the whole body, exactly like the skin of a monkey, with a long bare tail, a bald back, enormous claws to the four paws, two long horns to the cowl, and a mask of disgusting deformity, with the teeth of a boar. I cried out with horror, protesting that my piece should not be played in this ridiculous and monstrous disguise. "What could you have wished?" said the taylor to me, with an impertinent air. "I could have wished," answered I, "that you had read the instructions I wrote; you would have seen that I asked for the dress of a man, and not of a monkey."—"The dress of a man for a beast?"—"And who has told you that Azor is a beast?"—"The story tells me so."—"The story is not my work; and my

work shall not be represented till all that be changed."—"It is too late now."—"Then I will go and petition the king to consent that this hideous spectacle may not be given: and I will tell the reason." My man then became more tame, and asked me what he should make. "The simplest thing in the world," answered I; "spotted pantaloons, shoes and gloves of the same, a doliman of purple satin, with black flowing hair, picturesquely scattered, a frightful mask, but not deformed, nor like a snout." There was great difficulty in finding all this, for the magazine was empty; but by dint of obstinacy I made myself obeyed; and as to the mask, I formed it myself of pieces cut out of several masks, and then joined together.

The next morning, I made Clairval try this dress; and in looking at himself in his glass, he found it noble and imposing.—"Now, my friend," said I, "your success depends upon the manner in which you shall enter on the stage. If you appear confused, timid, embarrassed, we are ruined. But if you shew yourself boldly, with assurance, and a firm expressive action, you will impose; and this moment once passed, I will answer for the rest."

I found in the decorator the same negligence with which this impertinent tailor had served me; and the magic picture, the most interesting part of the piece, must have failed, if I had not done what his awkwardness would have spoiled. With two ells of silver mohair, to imitate a pier looking-glass, and two ells of clear and transparent gauze, I taught him to produce one of the most agreeable theatrical illusions.

It was thus that, by my cares, instead of the shameful fall with which I was threatened, I obtained the most brilliant success. Clairval played his part as I desired. The bold and firm step with which he entered did but make that impression of astonishment which I expected from it; and from that instant I was tranquil. I was in a corner of the orchestra, and had behind me a row of ladies of the court. When Azor, on his knees at the feet of Zémire, sang to her,

From the instant we love,  
We're so mild, so docile too!  
Even I, gentle dove,  
Am more trembling than you;

I heard the ladies say to each other, *He's now no longer ugly; and the moment afterward, he is handsome.*

I ought not to dissemble that the charm of the music contributed marvellously to produce such effects. That of Grétry was then what it very rarely has been since; and he was not sufficiently sensible of the care I took to teach him the character, the form, and the design of an agreeable and simple song. In general, the fatuity of musicians is to believe that they owe nothing to their poet; and Grétry, with much talent, has had this folly in the highest degree.

As to *L'Ami de la Maison*, my complaisance for Madame la Ruelle, the actress, prevented the success which this piece might otherwise have obtained at court. My first wish was to give the

part of L'Ami de la Maison to Caillot; I had written it for him, he would have played it admirably; I was sure of it; but he refused it for a singular reason. "This situation," said he, too much resembles that in which we sometimes really are; and this character is too much like that which is attributed to us. Were I to play L'Ami de la Maison as you have conceived it, and as I feel it, no mother would afterward suffer me near her daughter."—"And Tartufe," I asked, "would you not play that?"—"Tartufe," answered he, "does not come so home to us; and no one in society is fearful of our being Tartufes."

Nothing could conquer his repugnance to a part which, he said, would do him the more injury the better he should play it. At the same time I had observed that La Ruette was very desirous of having it; and I perceived that his wife thought, after Caillot, I could but give it to him; Grétry was of the same opinion; I suffered myself to be guided; and I repented of it from the first rehearsal. This part required youth, vivacity, brilliancy of voice, and delicate acting. The good La Ruette, with an oldish face and a trembling broken voice, was quite out of his walk in this character. He made it sad and pitiful; as he was not at his ease, he did not even play it with his usual simplicity; he spoiled every scene.

On her part, Madame La Ruette, who had a little prudery, persuading herself that the trick and subtlety which I had introduced into the character of Agathe were not suited to so young a woman, had thought it her duty to blunt the point of those playful wiles, and had substituted an air of severity and reserve that took away from the part all its pretty graces.

Thus my whole work had been disfigured. Fortunately La Ruette himself discovered that the part of Cléon did not suit him either as an actor or a singer: and I found at the same theatre one Julien, less difficult than Caillot, and younger than La Ruette, with a brilliant voice, a lively action, and an animated figure. Grétry and I undertook to teach him his part; and he succeeded in singing and playing it tolerably well.

Madame La Ruette was very little disposed to hear what I had to say to her; however I just said, "Madame, we shall be cold, if we seek to be too prudent? do me the favour to play the part of Agathe to the life. Her innocence is not that of Agnès, but it is still innocence; and as she only employs her artifice and her wiles to mock the villain who endeavours to seduce her, believe me it will please in her." Her part had the greatest success, and the piece having been demanded again at Versailles (in 1772) appeared there so changed that it was scarcely recognized. Yet I made no alteration in it.

It was not till three years afterward that I gave *La Fausse Magie*, and though its first success was not so brilliant as that of the two others, it has not been less lasting. For more than twenty years it has frequently been revived at the theatre, and the public are not tired of it. However, it is very true that these little pieces have lost some of their lustre and the flower

of their allurements, in losing the actors for whom I had written them.

That same year (1772) I had at court an appearance of success of another kind, and which touched me more sensibly; it was the effect that my epistle to the king on the subject of the Hôtel-Dieu produced, or appeared to produce. My vanity had no concern in it, but the lively and profound impression that I had made, as I was told, was about to change the lot of those poor sufferers whose groans and complaints I had expressed so forcibly, that they were heard; and, for the first time in my life, I fancied myself a benefactor of humanity. I gloried in it; I would have resigned the last drop of my blood to have made this event crown my work; but I have not had that happiness.

The ode in praise of Voltaire is nearly of the same date. What gave birth to it was this: the society of Mademoiselle Clairon was more numerous and brilliant than ever. Conversation was there animated, particularly when poetry was its subject; and the man of letters had there an opportunity of conversing with men of the world of exquisite taste and very cultivated minds. It was in one of these conversations that, in speaking of lyric poetry, I said that the ode could no longer have among us that character of truth and dignity which it had in Greece, because poets had no longer the same ministry to fulfil; that the Bards alone, among the Gauls, had shown this grand character, because they were, by profession, employed to celebrate the glory of heroes.

"And in our days," asked they, "what prevents the poet from assuming this ancient character, and consecrating himself to this public ministry?" I answered, "that if there were, as formerly, *fêtes*, solemnities, where the poet was heard, the pomp of these grand exhibitions would elevate his soul and his genius." As an example, I supposed the apotheosis of Voltaire, and on a vast theatre, at the foot of his statue, Mademoiselle Clairon reciting verses in praise of that illustrious man; "Can you think," asked I, "that the ode destined for this solemn eulogy would not assume in its spirit, and in the soul of the poet, a truer and more animated tone, than that which he should coldly compose in his cabinet?" I saw that this idea made its impression, and Mademoiselle Clairon above all appeared forcibly struck with it. Hence I conceived the project of writing, as an essay, that ode which you will find in the collection of my poems.

In reading it, Mademoiselle Clairon felt that her talent could supply in it what mine could not effect, and was pleased to lend once again to my verses the charm of illusion which she so well knew how to inspire.

One evening then, when the company were assembled in her drawing-room, and had sent word that they were expecting her, as we were talking of Voltaire, a curtain suddenly rises, and, by the side of the bust of that great man, Mademoiselle Clairon, dressed as priestess of Apollo, with a crown of laurel in her hand, begins to recite my ode with an air of inspiration, and in

the tone of enthusiasm. This little *fête* had afterward the merit of giving birth to one more solemn, and at which Voltaire was present.

A little time afterward, the Count de Valbelle, Mademoiselle Clairon's lover, enriched by the death of his elder brother, being gone to enjoy his fortune in the city of Aix, in Provence, and the Prince d'Anspach having fallen in love with the princess of the stage, she was obliged to take a more ample and more commodious house than that in which we lodged together. It was then that I went to occupy, at the Countess de Séran's, the apartment which she had kept for me, and it was there that M. Odde came and passed a year with me.

I could have wished to retire with him to Bort; and for that purpose I had thought of purchasing a little land a few paces from the town, where I should have built myself a cot. Fortunately, this land was valued at so exorbitant a price that I could not buy it, and was forced to renounce it. I still continued therefore to indulge in the society of Paris, and particularly in that of the ladies, but resolved to refrain from every connection that might disturb my repose.

I paid my court to the Countess de Séran as assiduously as I could do, without being importunate. She had the kindness to express a wish that I would go and pass the spring with her in Normandy, at her little country seat of La Tour, which she was adorning. I accompanied her thither. What would I not have quitted for her? All the charm that the friendship of a woman and her most intimate converse can have, without love, was offered me with her. Had it been possible to be in love without hope, I certainly should have been so with Madame de Séran; but she so distinctly and so ingenuously marked to me the boundary of her sentiments for me, and of those I might indulge for her, that even my wishes never went beyond them.

I was likewise united in pure and simple friendship with women who, in the decline of life, had not ceased to be engaging, and of whom Fontenelle would have said: *You may easily see that love has been there.* I had not for them that veneration which is reserved only for virtue; but they inspired me with a sentiment of benevolence that was scarcely less attaching, and which flattered them more. It touched me to see decaying beauty sadden before its mirror, to find its charms had faded. She who, of all my friends, was most afflicted at this irreparable loss, was Madame de La P\*\*\*. She reminded me in her melancholy of these words of a celebrated Grecian beauty, suspending her looking-glass in the temple of her divinity:

I give it to Venus, for she's ever fair,

It only redoubles my pain:

The face it now shews me augments my despair,

It forgets what I could not retain.

The most feeling, the most delicate, the most lovely of hearts was that of Madame de L. P\*\*\*. Without pretending to indemnify her for the ravages of time, I sought to console her for them by all the attentions of a rational and tender friend; and, like a

docile patient, she accepted all the comforts that my reason offered her. She had even anticipated my counsels in attempting to divert her weariness by cultivating a taste for study, and this taste charmed our leisure. In the early splendor of her beauty no one suspected how much wit Nature had endowed her with. She was ignorant of it herself. Wholly occupied with her other charms, dreaming only of her pleasures, her voluptuousness and her indolence left as it were asleep, at the bottom of her soul, a crowd of delicate, subtle, and accurate perceptions, which had crept there without her knowledge, and which, in the sad leisure hours she now had left for recalling them, seemed to disclose themselves in abundance, and without exertion. I used to see them in our conversations awake and expand with infinite grace and ease. Her complaisance induced her to follow me in my studies and my labours; she aided me in my researches; but while her mind was occupied, her heart was vacant; that was her torment. All her sensibility inclined to our mutual friendship; and, confined within the limits of the only sentiments that accorded with her age and mine, it became still more lively. Whether at Paris or in the country, I was as assiduous as possible in my attentions to her. I even very often quitted for her societies in which my taste would have been more gratified, and I did for friendship what I have very rarely done for love. But no person on earth loved me so tenderly as Madame de L. P\*\*\*; and when I had said to myself, "All the rest of the world are happy though I be absent," I no longer hesitated to abandon all for her. My philosophical and literary societies were the only ones of which she was not jealous; by every other diversion I afflicted her; and her reproaches touched me the more forcibly, as they were gentle, timid, and discreet.

At that time my occupations were divided between history and the *Encyclopédie*. I had made it a point of honour to fulfil worthily my functions of historiographer, by carefully writing some memoirs for future historians. I addressed myself to the most distinguished men of that time, in order to draw from them some information relative to the reign of Lewis XV, where I intended to begin; and I was myself astonished at the confidence they shewed me. The Count de Maillebois gave me all his father's papers and his own. The Marquis de Castries gave me free access to his cabinet, which contained the memoirs of Marshal de Belle-Isle; the Count de Broglie initiated me in the mysteries of his secret negotiations; Marshal de Contades traced to me with his own hand the plan of his campaign, and the disaster of Minden. I wanted the confidence of Marshal Richelieu: but I, as well as all men of letters in the academy, was in disgrace with him. Accident made my peace; and this is again one of the events in which opportunity, in order to serve me, has extended her hand to me.

A fair and intimate friend of Marshal Richelieu, being with me on a visit in the country, observed to me, it was very strange that a Richelieu, a man of so much importance, should be exposed to incivilities and affronts at the French Academy. "In-



deed, Madame," answered I, "nothing is more strange; but who is the cause of it?" She named d'Alembert, who, she said, had taken an aversion to the marshal. I answered, "that the marshal's enemy at the academy was not d'Alembert, but he who sought to incense him against d'Alembert and against all men of letters."

"Do you know, Madame," added I, "who they are that provoke against the academy the man who is formed to be honoured and loved there? They are academicians who themselves enjoy no consideration there, and who are furious against it. 'Tis the attorney-general, Séguier, the accuser of men of letters to the parliament; 'tis Paulney, and some other intruders, who, dissatisfied with a corps in which they are misplaced, would wish, with Séguier and our enemy, to raise a formidable party. These are the people who try to alienate from us the mind of the marshal, in order to have him at their head, and injure us by his credit. What glory for him, to serve their hatred and their vanity! You see what benefit he derives from it. He persuades the king to refuse to approve the election of two irreproachable men. The academy declares against this refusal, and the king, undeceived, consents that these same men be elected to the two first places that shall become vacant. It was in vain. It was only beating the air. No, Madame, the true party for a Richelieu at the academy, the only one worthy of the marshal, is the party of the men of letters."

She thought I was right; and some days afterward, the marshal being come to dine at the same house, she was desirous that he should talk with me. I repeated to him nearly the same things, though in gentler terms; and, with respect to d'Alembert, "D'Alembert, marshal," said I, "believes you to be the enemy of men of letters, and the friend of their accuser Séguier: this is the reason why he does not like you. But d'Alembert is a good man, and the sentiment of hatred has never taken root in his heart. He is wedded to the academy. Love therefore this wife of his as dearly as you love the wives of so many others, and come sometimes to see her; he will be flattered by it, and will welcome you, as so many other husbands do."

The marshal was pleased; and when, instead of the Abbé De-lille and Suard, refused by the king, it was necessary to elect two other academicians, I was invited to dine at his house on the day of the election. At this dinner, I found Séguier, Paulney, and Bissy, the bishop of Senlis. Their party was not numerous; and should they have had some clandestine votes, ours was so formed and united as to be sure of victory. I therefore did not appear to think that we were there to talk of academic elections: and as at a dinner of joy and pleasure, introducing with the soup the light pleasantry that most diverted the marshal, I led him to converse on ancient gallantry, on the pretty women of his time, the manners of the regency; I know not what, in short, of the theatre, and, above all, of the actresses; so that the dinner passed without a single word having been said about the academy. It was not till we rose from table that the Bishop of Senlis,

taking me aside, asked me what choice we were going to make. I answered loyally, that I believed all the votes were united in favour of Brequigny and Beauzée. The marshal, who was come to join us, requested me to explain the literary merit of these two candidates, and; after having heard me, "Since," said he, "they are two worthy men, we must unite for them."—"As that is your intention, marshal," I replied, "will you permit me to go and inform the academy of it? They are words of peace, that will be heard with pleasure."—"Go," said he, "and take one of my carriages; we'll follow you very soon."

"My dear friend," said I to d'Alembert, "they are coming to unite with us: the marshal makes you the first advances with a good grace; he must be received in like manner." Indeed he was well received; the election was unanimous; and from that day, till his death, he shewed me every kindness. Thus his papers were at my disposition.

I had, at the same time, for the affairs of the regency, the original manuscript of the memoirs of Saint-Simon, which I had been permitted to take from the office for foreign affairs, and from which I made ample extracts. But these extracts, and the spoils of dispatches and memorials which I found in abundance, would soon have been as tedious as fatiguing to me, if I had not had, at intervals, some literary occupation less painful and more to my taste. The enterprise of a supplement to the *Encyclopédie*, in four volumes in folio, offered me this recreation.

You should know that, after the publication of the seventh volume of the *Encyclopédie*, the continuation having been interrupted by a decree of the parliament, it had only been carried on in silence and between a small number of co-operators, among whom I was not included. A laborious compiler, the Chevalier de Jaucour, had undertaken the literary part, and had done it in his way, which was not mine. When, then, by dint of constancy and solicitation, they obtained permission to publish the whole work, and the object of a supplement had been formed, one of the proprietors, Robinet, called on me, and proposed to me to resume my labour where I had left off. "You only began," said he to me, "at the third volume; you closed at the seventh: all the rest is by another hand. *Pendent opera interrupta*. We come to beg you to complete your work."

As I was occupied with history, I answered, "that it was impossible for me to engage in any other work."—"At least," said he, "let us announce that in this supplement you will give a few articles."—"I'll do it," replied I, "if I have leisure; that is all I can promise." Some time afterward he returned to the charge, and with him Panckoucke the bookseller. They told me, that in order to regulate the accounts of this enterprise, it was requisite for them to know what recompence each literary man would require for his labour, and that they came to inquire what I demanded for mine. "What can I demand?" said I, "I who promise nothing, who make no positive engagement!"—"You shall do for us what you please," answered Panckoucke, "only promise to give us a few articles, and permit us to insert this

promise in our Prospectus : we will give you for that one hundred and sixty guineas, and a copy of the supplement." They were very sure that I should make a point of answering their confidence. I answered it so well, that, in the sequel, they confessed I had exceeded their expectation. But let us resume the thread of the events of my life, that was varied by a thousand accidents.

The death of the king had just produced a considerable change at court, in the ministry, and singularly in the fortune of my friends.

M. Bouret had ruined himself by building and decorating for the king the pavilion of Croix Fontaine; and the king thought he paid him enough for it by honouring it, once a year, with his presence on one of his hunting parties; an honour that was the more dear to this unfortunate man, as he was obliged, on that day, to give the whole hunt a dinner, for which nothing was spared.

I had more than once lamented his profusion; but the most liberal, the most improvident of men had, for his real friends, the fault of never listening to their counsels when they related to his extravagance. However, he had completely exhausted his credit by building in the Elysian Fields five or six houses at a great expense, when the king died, without having even thought of saving him from ruin; and this death leaving him overburdened with debt, without resource and without hope, he resolved, I believe, to rid himself of life : he was found dead in his bed. He was, for his misfortune, imprudent even to madness; he was never unkind.

Madame de Séran was more prudent. Having no longer, at the death of the king, any prospect of favour and protection either for herself, or for her children, she made a more solid employment of the only benefit she had accepted; and the new director of the royal buildings, Count. d'Angiviller, having proposed to purchase her hôtel, for himself, at a fair price, she consented to it. Thus, in 1776, we were both obliged to remove, three years after she had granted me that welcome hospitality.

The accession of the new king to the crown was followed by his coronation in the cathedral at Rheims.

In my quality of historiographer of France, I was ordered to be present at this august ceremony. I will not repeat here what I have said of it in a letter that was printed without my knowledge, and which I have since inserted in the collection of my works. It is a feeble picture of the effect of this grand solemnity on fifty thousand spectators who were assembled there. As to what is personal to me, never did any thing affect me so strongly.

Besides, I had in this journey all the advantages that my place could procure me, and I thought I owed them to the honourable manner in which Marshal Beauveau, captain of the guards on duty, and my brother-member at the French academy, had the kindness to treat me.

Of all the women I have known, she whose politeness has most simplicity and charm is Madame de Beauveau. She shewed, as well as her husband, a delicate and marked attention to give the example of those which they wished other people to pay to me; and this example was followed. Feeling intimately the testimonies of their kindness, I have since cultivated it with care. The cha-

acter of the marshal was not so engaging as that of his wife. Yet that cold dignity, which has been attributed to him as a reproach, never subjected me to the smallest constraint. I was persuaded that, in every other situation, his air, his manners, his tone, would have been the same; and, in adapting myself to what seemed to me to be his native disposition, I found him civil, kind-hearted, obliging, and even eager to serve me, without vanity. As for his wife, now his widow, I do not believe that there is, under heaven, a character more lovely or more accomplished than hers. It is indeed she who may justly and without irony be called the woman who is always right. But the accuracy, the precision, the invariable clearness of her understanding is accompanied with so much gentleness, simplicity, modesty, and grace, that she makes us love the superiority she has over us. It seems that she communicates her soul to us, that she associates our ideas with hers, and makes us participate in the advantage she always has of thinking so justly and so well. Her great art, as well as her most continual care, was to honour her husband, to represent him in the fairest colours, to efface herself in order to put him in her place, and to yield to him the interest, the considerations, the respect that she attracted. She would say that all which was praised in her should be referred to M. de Beauveau. Observe, my dear children, that she lost nothing by this conjugal devotion, that it even honoured her, and that the reflected lustre she lent to the character of her husband did but give to her own more relief and brilliancy. No woman ever felt more forcibly the dignity of her duties as a wife, nor ever fulfilled them with more nobleness.

My letter on the ceremony of the coronation, published and distributed at court by the intendant at Champagne, had there produced the effect of a picture that retraced to the eyes of the king and the queen a day of glory and happiness. With them, it was, for me, a beginning of favour. The queen, soon afterwards, shewed me some kindness. In her own apartments, on a little stage, she wished to see played *Silvan* and *L'Ami de la Maison*. This little performance gave very great pleasure; and, in passing, the queen said to me, with the loveliest air, "*Marmontel, that is charming.*" But this prospect of protection was soon clouded by the part I took in favour of Italian music.

Under the late king, the Neapolitan ambassador had persuaded the court to procure from Italy a good composer, in order to regenerate the French opera, which had long been on the brink of ruin, and was supported with difficulty at the expense of the public treasury. The new mistress, Madame Dubarry, had adopted this idea, and our ambassador at the court of Naples, the Baron de Breteuil, had been charged to engage Piccini to come and establish himself in France, with an annual gratification of two hundred and fifty pounds, on condition of giving us French operas.

He was scarcely arrived, when my friend, the Neapolitan ambassador, the Marquis de Caraccioli, came to recommend him to me, and to request I would write for him a tragic opera, such as I had written for Grétry at the comic opera-house.

At that time the composer, Gluck, had lately arrived from Germany, as strongly recommended to the young queen, by her brother the Emperor Joseph, as if the success of German music had had the importance of business of state. A French opera of *Iphigénie en Aulide* had been composed at Vienna, on the plan of a ballet, by Nôvère. Gluck had written the music for it; and this opera, by which he had made his *début* in France, had met with the greatest success. The young queen had declared in favour of Gluck; and Piccini, who, on his arriving, found him established in the public opinion in town and at court, not only had no one for him, but at court he had against him the odious title of a composer protected by the mistress of the late king, and in town he had for enemies all the French composers, who found it more easy to imitate the German music than the Italian, whose style and accent they despaired of assuming.

If I had had a little policy, I should have ranged myself on the side of favour. But the music that was patronised no more resembled, in its teutonic forms, that which I had heard of Pergolese, of Leo, of Buranello, &c., than the style of Crébillon resembles that of Racine; and to prefer the Crébillon to the Racine of music would have been an effort of dissimulation that I could not have borne.

Beside, I had conceived a project of introducing Italian music on our two theatres; and you have seen that, in comic operas, I had begun with some success. It is not that Grétry's music had all the charm of the best music of the Italians, it was still far from attaining that whole which enchants us in the works of the great composers. But he had an easy song, simplicity of expression, airs and duos agreeably designed; sometimes even in the orchestra a happy employment of instruments; with taste too, and understanding enough to supply what he wanted on the side of science and of genius; and if his music had not all the witchery, and all the richness of that of Piccini, of Sacchini, of Paisiello, it had its rhythm, its accent, its prosody; I had shewn then that, at least in comedy, the French language might have a music of the same style as Italian music.

It remained for me to make the same trial in tragedy, and accident now offered me an opportunity of doing so. The problem was more difficult to solve, but, for other reasons than those which had been imagined.

Dignified language is less favourable to music, first, because it has no inflections so lively, so accented, so docile to song as the language of comedy: secondly, because it has less range, less abundance, and less liberty in the choice of expression. But a much greater difficulty to me arose from the idea I had conceived of a lyric poem, and of the theatrical form I wished to give it. I had made with Grétry the perilous attempt in the opera of *Céphale et Procris*. In dividing the action into three pictures—one voluptuous and brilliant, the palace of Aurora, her waking, her loves, the pleasures of her celestial court; another dark and fearful, the plot of jealousy, and its poison poured into the heart of Procris; the third, touching, passionate, tragic, the error of *Céphale*, and the

death of his wife pierced with his darts, and expiring in his arms; I fancied I had fulfilled the idea of an interesting theatrical exhibition: but, not having succeeded in this first trial, and attributing to myself a part of our misfortune, my distrust of my own powers extended even to fear.

The sentiment of my own weakness, and the good opinion I entertained of the celebrated composer with whom I was honoured in Piccini, made me conceive the idea of taking the beautiful operas of Quinault, to prune them of their episodes and superfluous details; to reduce them to their real beauties, to add to them airs, duos, monologues in recitative, chorusses in dialogue and in contrast; to accommodate them thus to Italian music, to form of them a kind of lyric poem more varied, more animated, more simple, less unconnected in its action, and infinitely more rapid than the Italian opera.

Metastasio himself, whom I studied, whom I admired as a model in the art of designing his verses for song, often appeared to me insupportably tedious, and void of continuity. Those double intrigues, those episodic amours, those detached scenes so multiplied, those airs almost always lost, as has been said, like vignettes at the end of the scenes, all shocked me. I wanted a full action, rapid, and closely connected, in which the situations, chained to each other, were themselves the object and the motive of the song; so that the song should only be the more lively expression of the feelings of the scene, and that the airs, the duos, the chorusses should be enterwoven with the recitatives. I wanted, beside, that, in giving itself these advantages, the French opera should preserve its pomp, its prodigies, its solemnities, its illusion, and that, enriched with all the beauties of Italian music, it should still be that spectacle,

Where verse, the dance, sweet music's varied tone,  
The art to cheat the eye with colours, the art  
To captivate, seduce, and win the soul,  
Unite a thousand witching charms in one.

VOLT.

It was in this spirit that the opera of *Roland* was recomposed. As soon as I had put this poem in the state I wished, I felt as lively a joy as if I had written it myself. I saw the work of Quinault in his plain and simple beauty; I saw the idea which I had conceived of a French lyric poem realised, or on the point of being so by a skilful composer. This composer did not know a word of French; I undertook to be his master. "When," said he to me in Italian, "shall we be able to begin this work?"—"To-morrow morning," I replied; and the next day I went to his lodgings.

Figure to yourselves what labour I had in instructing him: verse by verse, almost word by word, it was requisite to explain all to him; and when he had well seized the sense of a passage, I declaimed it to him, in marking very accurately the accent, the prosody, the cadence of the verses, the pauses, the half-pauses, the articulations of the phrase; he listened to me with eager attention, and I had the pleasure of perceiving that what he had heard was faithfully noted in his memory. The accent and the number of the

language struck so justly that excellent ear, that, in his music, neither the one nor the other were ever, or scarcely ever, altered. He had so prompt a sensibility to seize the most delicate inflections of the voice, that he could express even the finest shades of feeling.

It was for me an inexpressible pleasure, to see exercising under my eyes an art, or rather a genius, of which till then I had no idea. His harmony was in his head. His orchestra, and all the effects it should produce, were present to him. He wrote his song without hesitation, and when the design of it was traced, he filled all the parts of the instruments or the voice, distributing touches of melody and of harmony as a skilful painter would have distributed on his canvass colours and shades, to compose his picture. This labour completed, he opened his harpsichord, which till then had served him as a table; and I heard an air, a duo, a chorus complete in all its parts, with a truth of expression, an intelligence, a whole, a magic accord, that enchanted the ear and the soul.

It was there that I recognized the man I sought, the man who possessed his science, and governed it at his will; and it is thus that the music of *Roland* was composed, which, in spite of cabal, had the most glorious success.

In the mean time, and in proportion as the work advanced, the zealous amateurs of good music, at the head of whom were the Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors, rallied round the harpsichord of Piccini, to hear every day some new scene; and every day enjoyments recompensed my pains.

Among these amateurs of music were the two Morellets, my personal friends, and the most active friends Piccini had formed in France. It was by them that, on his arrival, he had been received, welcomed, lodged, provided with the first necessities of life. They spared nothing to serve and to gratify him; and their house was his.—I loved to think that to see us associated together was for them an additional motive of the interest they took in him; and between them and me this object of common affection was a new aliment of friendship.

The Abbé Morellet and I had not ceased to live for twenty years in the same societies, often opposed in opinion, always agreeing in feeling and in principles, and full of esteem for each other. In our liveliest disputes, no trait of bitterness or severity was ever mixed. Without flattering, we loved each other.

His brother, who had lately arrived from Italy, was for me quite a new friend; but he had won my heart by his integrity and his frankness. They lived together; and their sister, the widow of M. Leyrin de Montigny, was coming from Lyons, with her young daughter, to embellish their society.

The abbé, who had announced to me the happiness that awaited them of being thus united in one family, wrote me, one day, the following note: "My dear friend, to-morrow our ladies arrive; pray come and aid us to welcome them."

My destiny will now assume a new face; and it is from this note that I date the virtuous and unalterable happiness that awaited me in my age, and which I have enjoyed for twenty years.

## BOOK X.

SO long as heaven had left me, in Madame Odde, a sister tenderly dear, and who loved me rather with filial than with fraternal love, sure of having in her worthy and virtuous husband a true friend, whose house would be mine, whose children would be mine, I knew where I could pass my age in peace. The esteem and the confidence that Odde had acquired, the excellent reputation which he enjoyed in his profession; rendered his advancement facile and secure to me, and had he only preserved the employment that he held at Saumur, my little fortune, added to his, would have procured us an honourable ease. Thus, when the world and I should have been tired and weary of each other, my age had a calm and grateful retreat. In this happy confidence I glided gently down the current of life, and without inquietude I saw myself on my decline.

But when I had lost my sister, and her children; when, in his affliction, Odde, abandoning a town where he saw only their tombs, and resigning his place, had retired to his native province, my prospect of future comfort, till then so serene, suddenly darkened; I saw nothing left for me but the dangers of marriage, or the solitude of sad celibacy and forsaken age.

I dreaded in marriage the domestic vexations that it would have been impossible for me to endure without dying, and of which I saw a thousand examples. But a misfortune still more dreadful was that of an old man, obliged either to bear the buffets of the world, while he there drags out a wearisome and lingering decay, or to remain alone, deserted, at the mercy of his servants, a prey to their rude insolence and servile dominion. In this painful situation I had more than once attempted to find myself a companion, and to adopt a family that should supply the place of that which death had torn from me. But, by a happy fatality, no one of my projects had succeeded, when I saw arrive at Paris the sister and the niece of my friends the two Morellets. It was a grace from heaven.

At the same time, all amiable as they both appeared to me, the mother, by a character of frankness, of cordiality, of kindness; the daughter by an air of candour and modesty that, united to beauty, embellished it yet more; both, by a language in which I easily perceived as much wit as reason, I did not imagine that I, who was more than fifty, could be a suitable husband for a girl who was scarcely eighteen. What dazzled me in her, that bloom of youth, that brilliancy of beauty, so many charms that nature had yet scarcely disclosed, was what necessarily suppressed my hope, and with hope the desire of possessing her.

In this agreeable adventure, then, I saw nothing for me but a new and charming society.

Whether it be that Madame de Montigny was predisposed in



my favour, or that my simplicity pleased her at first sight, she assumed the same tone, with the friend of her brothers, as with an old friend whom she herself should have found again. We supped together. The joy they all felt at being met together animated the repast. I shared this joy as if I too had been their brother. I was invited to dinner for the next day, and by degrees we contracted the habit of seeing each other every day.

The more I conversed with the mother, the more I listened to the daughter, the more did I discover in both that engaging naturalness which has always charmed me. But, once again, my age, the slenderness of my fortune, did not allow me to see any prospect of happiness for myself in that which I foretold for the husband of Mademoiselle de Montigny; and more than two months had elapsed before the idea occurred to me of aspiring to that happiness.

One morning, a friend of mine, who was also one of the friends of the Morellets, the Abbé Maury, called on me, and said, "Shall I tell you a piece of news? Mademoiselle de Montigny is going to be married."—"Married! to whom?"—"To you."—"To me!"—"Yes, to you yourself."—"You are mad, or you are dreaming."—"I do not dream, and it is no madness; it is a very sensible thing; and none of your friends doubt it." "Hear me," said I, "and believe me; for I speak to you seriously. Mademoiselle de Montigny is a charming girl; I think her accomplished; and for this reason I never had the mad idea of pretending to be her husband."—"Well, you will be so, without having pretended to it."—"At my age!"—"Ay! at your age! You are still young, and in full health." And then he displayed all his eloquence to prove to me that nothing was more suitable; that I should be loved; that we should make a happy couple; and, in a prophetic tone, he pronounced to me that we should have charming children.

After this sally, he left me to indulge my reflections; and while I said to myself that he was mad, I began to be scarcely more wise. To be fifty-four no longer appeared to me so dreadful an obstacle; health, at that age, might supply the place of youth. I began to think that I might inspire, not love, but a kind and tender friendship; and I recollected what sages had said, that friendship makes more happy couples than love.

I thought I had remarked in this young and beautiful girl some pleasure in seeing me, some pleasure in hearing me; her fine eyes, when fixed on me, had a character of interest and of benevolence. I even went so far as to fancy that in the attentions with which her mother honoured me, in the pleasure that her uncle shewed at the frequency of my visits, there was, perhaps, some disposition favourable to the wish I dared not form. I was not rich; but five thousand guineas, securely placed, were the fruit of my savings. In fine, since a sincere friend, the Abbé Maury, thought this union not only rational but desirable on both sides, why should I myself think it so ill matched?

I was engaged on that day to dine at Morellet's. I went there with an emotion that was new to me. I think too I recollect having dressed myself rather smarter than usual; and from that in-

stant my attention was seriously fixed on what began to interest me very strongly. Not a word was neglected, not a look escaped me: I delicately made imperceptible advances, and light traits on their minds and on their hearts. The abbé seemed to pay no attention to them; but his sister, his brother, and his niece, seemed to me very sensible to all that came from me.

About this time, the abbé made a journey to Brienne, in Champagne, to see the unfortunate Loménic, with whom he had been intimate from his youth; and, in his absence, the society became more familiar and more closely united.

I well knew that flattering appearances might render the attraction of a first union deceitful; I knew what illusion grace joined with beauty could create: two or three months of acquaintance and social intimacy could scarcely suffice to assure myself of the disposition of a young girl. I had seen more than one in the world, who had only been taught to feign and dissemble; but I had heard so much in praise of the simplicity of Mademoiselle de Montigny, and this simplicity appeared to me so unaffected, so pure, and so true, so far removed from every species of dissimulation, of feint, and of artifice; kind heartedness, innocence, tender modesty were so visibly expressed in her air and in her language, that I felt myself invincibly inclined to believe all I was told of her; and if I did give credit to so much semblance of truth, I must renounce all confidence and believe nothing.

A walk in the gardens at Sceaux ripened my decision. Never did this place appear to me so beautiful; never had I breathed the air of the country with so much delight; the presence of Mademoiselle de Montigny had embellished all: her looks spread I know not what enchantment around her. What I felt was not that delirium of the senses which is called love; it was a calm enjoyment, such as that of pure spirits is painted. What do I say? it seems to me that I then, for the first time, recognized the true sentiment of love.

Till then, sensual pleasure had been the only charm that had guided me. Here I found myself enchanted by more invincible spells; they were candour, innocence, sweet sensibility, chaste and timid bashfulness, a modesty whose veil adorned grace and beauty; it was virtue crowned with the flowers of youth, that ravished my soul still more than my eyes; a kind of sorcery infinitely above all those of the Armidas that I once thought I saw in the gay world.

My emotion was the more lively, because it was suppressed. . . . . I longed to make an avowal of it; but to whom address it? and how would it be received? The good mother gave occasion to it. In the alley where we were walking, she was at three steps from us with her brother. "What confidence," said she to me, smiling, "I must have in you, to suffer you to talk thus with my daughter tête-à-tête."—"Madame," said I to her, "it is right that I should return that confidence, by telling you what was the subject of our conversation. Mademoiselle was picturing to me the happiness you enjoy by being all four united in one family; and I, who felt envious of this happiness, was going

to ask you if a fifth, such as I, for instance, would spoil the society." "I should think not," answered she; "but ask my brother."—"I," said the brother, with frankness, "should be highly pleased with it."—"And you, Mademoiselle?"—"I," said she, "I hope that my uncle the abbé will think as my mother does; but, till his return, permit me to be silent."

As we all concluded that his sentiments would coincide with our own, as my intention was now declared, and the mother, the daughter, and the uncle, had consented, I no longer dissembled. I even thought I perceived that a sentiment which occupied me incessantly found some access to the heart of her who was its object.

The abbé made us wait for him; at last he arrived: and though all had been settled without his consent, he gave it. The next day the contract was signed. He made his niece his heiress after his death, and after the death of his sister; and I, in this deed, drawn up and written by their attorney, was only anxious to render, after me, my wife happy, and independent of her children.

Never was a marriage celebrated under happier auspices. As the confidence between Mademoiselle de Montigny and myself was mutual and perfect, and as we had well persuaded each other that our feelings agreed intimately with the vow which we were about to make at the altar, we pronounced it without agitation and without inquietude.

On our return from the church, where Chastellux and Thomas had held over us the nuptial veil, our friends were pleased to leave us for some moments alone; and these moments were employed in expressing mutually our earnest desire to render each other happy. This first effusion of two hearts, that had sincerity on one side, and innocence on the other, and on both sides the tenderest friendship united for ever, is perhaps the most delicious moment in life.

The dinner, after the toilette, was animated by the gaiety of the good old time. The guests were D'Alembert, Chastellux, Thomas, Saint-Lambert, a cousin of the Morellets, and some other common friends. All were occupied with the bride; and, like me, all were so charmed with her, and so jovial, that to see them you would have said that each was her bridegroom.

When we rose from table, we passed into a saloon, which was decorated by the rich library of the Abbé Morellet. There, a harpsichord, and little desks, announced music; but what new and bewitching music were we to hear! The opera of Roland, the first French opera that had been set to Italian music, and to execute it the finest voices and the most distinguished musicians of the opera house.

The emotion that this novelty excited had all the charm of surprise. Piccini was at the harpsichord; he animated the orchestra and the actors with the fire of his genius and of his soul. The Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors were present at this concert. This species of enchantment lasted till supper, to which the singers and symphonists were invited.

Thus passed this grateful day, the epoch and the presages of

that happiness which has spread itself over all the rest of my life, through the adversities that have often disturbed but have never impaired it.

It was agreed that we should live together, the two uncles, the mother, and ourselves, each paying a fifth part of the expenses of the house; and this plan suited me in every respect. It united the advantage of domestic fellowship to that of a society of friends, wholly formed, which we had only to enjoy.

I have made you acquainted with some of those whom we could call our friends; but there are still others, of whom I have much to speak, but cursorily, and on whom my memory delights to repose.

You have a thousand times, my dear children, heard your mother say what pleasure we derived from the company of M. de Saint-Lambert and the Countess d'Houdetot, his friend; and what was the charm of a society where wit, taste, the love of letters, and the most essential and most desirable qualities of the heart, attracted and attached us, either to the sage D'Eaubonne, or to the sweet retreat of La Seigné de Sanois. Never did two minds and two souls form a more perfect concord of sentiments and ideas. But they resembled each other above all by an inviting eagerness to give a hearty welcome to their friends. Politeness at once free, easy, attentive, the politeness of an exquisite taste, which comes from the heart, which goes to the heart, and which souls of sensibility can only know.

Saint-Lambert and I had been of the societies of Baron d'Holbach, of Helvétius, of Madame Geoffrin; we were as constantly of that of Madame Necker; but in this I was his senior; I was nearly its oldest member.

It was at a citizen's ball, a singular circumstance, that I had become acquainted with Madame Necker; then young, with some beauty, and a brilliant freshness, dancing ill, but with her whole soul.

She had scarcely heard my name, when she came to me, with the genuine air of joy. "On arriving at Paris," said she, "one of my desires has been to know the author of the *Moral Tales*. I did not expect so fortunate a meeting at this ball. I hope that it will not be a transient adventure."—"Necker," said she to her husband, calling him, "come and aid me to engage M. MarmonTEL, the author of the *Moral Tales*, to do us the honour of visiting us." M. Necker was very civil in his invitation. I accepted it. Thomas was the only literary man whom they had known before me. But soon, in the beautiful hôtel which they went to inhabit, Madame Necker selected and composed her society, on the model of that of Madame Geoffrin.

A stranger to the manners of Paris, Madame Necker had none of the allurements of a young French woman. In her manners, in her language, it was neither the air, nor the tone of a woman educated in the school of the arts, and formed in the school of the world. Without taste in her dress, without ease in her carriage, without invitation in her politeness; her understanding, like her countenance, was too formal to have grace.

But a charm more worthy of her was that of decorum, of candour, of kindness. A virtuous education, and solitary studies, had given her all that cultivation can add in the soul to an excellent disposition. Her heart was perfect; but in her head, opinion was often confused and vague. Meditation, instead of clearing her ideas, troubled them; by exaggerating, she thought she enlarged them; to extend them, she bewildered herself in abstractions, or in hyperboles. She seemed to see certain objects only through a mist that magnified them to her eyes; and then her expressions were so inflated that their emphasis would have been laughable, had you not known that she was ingenuous.

Taste in her was less the feeling than a result of opinions, collected and transcribed into her pocket-book. Had she never cited her examples, it would have been easy to say on what and after whom her judgment had formed itself. In the art of writing she only esteemed elevation, majesty, pomp. Gradations, shades, the varieties of colouring and of tone, touched her feebly. She had heard much in praise of the genuine simplicity of Lafontaine, of the naturalness of Sevigné; she would talk of them from hear-say, while she felt them but little. The graces of negligence, ease, the flow of soul, were unknown to her. Even in conversation, familiarity displeased her. I often amused myself with observing how far she carried this delicacy. One day I cited to her some familiar expressions, which, I said, I thought might be received into the noblest style: *as faire l'amour; aller voir ses amours; commencer à voir clair; prenez votre parti; pour bien faire, il faudroit; non, voie-tu; faisons mieux, &c.* She rejected them as unworthy a dignified style. "Racine," said I to her, "has been less difficult than you. He has employed them all;" and I shewed her the examples. But her opinion, once established, was invariable; and the authority of Thomas, or that of Buffon, was for her an article of faith.

You would have said that she reserved rectitude and accuracy for the rule of her duties. There, all was precise and severely measured; even the amusements in which she seemed desirous of indulging had their reason, their method.

You would see her wholly occupied with making herself agreeable to her society, eager to welcome those she had admitted to it, attentive to say to each what could most please him; but all this was premeditated; nothing created illusion.

It was not for us, it was not for herself that she exerted all her cares; it was for her husband. To make him acquainted with us, to win our favour for him, to have him spoken of with eulogy in the world, and to begin his renown, was the principal object of the foundation of her literary society. But it was requisite too that her drawingroom, and that her dinner should be a recreation, a spectacle for her husband; for indeed he was there only a cold and silent spectator. Except a few smart words that he introduced here and there, he sat mute and inanimate, leaving to his wife the care of supporting the conversation. She did all she could, but her mind had none of those pretty graces that are the soul of the familiar dialogue of the table. Not a single sally, not one vivid touch,

not one flash of gaiety that could awaken wit. Restless, troubled as soon as she saw the scene and the dialogue languish, she sought the cause of it in our eyes. Sometimes, even, she had the sincerity to complain of it to me. "How can it be otherwise, madame?" used I to say to her, "wit is not always at our command, nor are we always in a humour to be engaging. M. Necker himself is, perhaps, not every day amusing."

The attentions of Madame Necker, and all her desire to please us, could not have conquered the disgust of being at her dinners only to divert and entertain her husband. But it was with these dinners as with many others, where the guests, enjoying themselves, dispense with wit and gaiety in their host, provided he dispense with their attentions.

While Necker was minister, those who had not known him in his private life, have attributed his silence, his gravity, his reserve, to the arrogance of his new situation. But I can attest that, even before fortune had thus elevated him, the simple partner of Thelusion the banker, he had the same air, the same grave and silent character; and that he was neither more friendly nor more familiar with us. He received his company civilly; but he had with none of us that cordiality, which, and which alone, gives to politeness the semblance of friendship.

His daughter has said of him, *that he had the art of keeping all men at a distance*. If that were her father's intention, in telling it, she would have betrayed, very inconsiderately, the secret of a ridiculous pride. But the simple truth was, that a man, accustomed from his youth to the mysterious operations of a bank, and buried in the calculations of commercial speculation, knowing nothing of the world, little conversant with men, and still less so with books, superficially and vaguely informed on all that did not concern his profession, such a man was obliged, by discretion, prudence, and self-love, to keep himself reserved, in order that he might not expose himself; thus he would speak freely and abundantly of what he knew well, but discreetly of all the rest. He was therefore adroit and prudent, and not arrogant. His daughter is sometimes rash, though she is always charming.

With respect to Madame Necker, she had among us some friends whom she distinguished; and I was always of this number. It was not that our opinions and tastes harmonised; I even affected to oppose my simple and vulgar ideas to her high conceptions; and it was requisite for her to descend from those inaccessible heights in order to communicate with me. But though unapt to follow her in the region of her thoughts, and more a slave to my senses than she would have wished, I was not the less one of her favourites.

Her society had for me one very precious advantage, that of meeting there the Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors, two men whose absence and whose loss I have most regretted. The one by his sincerity and his cordiality, as much as by his taste and his talents, rendered his converse every day more desirable to me. The other by his tender friendship, by his mild philosophy, by I know not what grateful odour of plain and modest virtue, by

a something melancholy and affecting in his language and in his character, attached me yet more intimately. I used to see them at my own house, at theirs, at our friend's, as often as possible, and never so often as I wished.

Happy in my social circles, still happier in my domestic enjoyments, I was expecting, eighteen months after my marriage, the birth of my first child, as an event that should crown all my wishes. Alas! how cruelly were my hopes deceived! this child, so ardently desired, died ere it saw the light. Its mother astonished, frightened at not hearing its cries, asked to see it; and I, motionless and trembling, was still in the adjoining drawing-room, waiting her delivery, when my mother-in-law came and said to me, "Come and embrace your dear wife, and save her from despair; your child has died in his birth." I felt my heart torn by these disastrous words. Pale and frozen, supporting myself with difficulty, I crept to the bed of my wife, and there, making an effort over myself, "My dear wife," said I to her, "this is the moment to prove to me that you really live for me. Our child is no more; he died while you suffered." The wretched mother uttered a cry that pierced my heart, and fell lifeless into my arms.

As she will read these memoirs, let us pass over those cruel moments, that I may not again open a wound that bled too long.

At the birth of her second child, I saw her resolved to suckle it. I opposed this resolution. I thought her still too feeble. The nurse that we had chosen was, apparently, the best possible; an air of health and freshness, a good complexion, rosy lips, beautiful teeth, the finest breast; she had every thing but milk. That breast was marble; the child wasted; it was at Saint Cloud; and, till its mother should be able to go and see it, the rector of the village had promised us to watch its progress; he indeed sent us news of it; but he had the cruelty to abuse us.

On arriving at the nurse's, we were painfully undeceived. "My dear little boy suffers," said his mother to me, "see how his hands are withered; he looks at me with eyes that implore my pity. This woman must bring him to Paris, that my surgeon may see him." She came; the surgeon was called in, he examined her breast, and he found she had no milk. He went instantly in search of another nurse; and as soon as the child had taken this new breast, where he drew from a full source, he found its milk so good that he could not satisfy himself.

What was our joy to see him visibly recover, and gain new life, like a dried and dying plant that is watered! This dear child was Albert; and we seemed to have a sweet presentiment of the consolations he gives us.

My wife, in order to keep the nurse with her, and give a pure air to the child, was desirous of having a house in the country, and a friend of her brother's lent us his at Saint-Brice.

In this village were two estimable men, intimately acquainted together, and whose friendship I soon enjoyed. One was the rector, the Abbé Maury's eldest brother, a man of a sound mind and an excellent character; the other was an old bookseller, Latour, a mild, peaceful, modest man, of delicate probity, and as

obliging to me as he was charitable to the poor of the village. His library was mine.

I was then writing for the *Encyclopédie*. I rose with the sun; and, after having employed eight or ten hours of the morning in committing to paper a multitude of observations, that I had made in my studies, I gave the rest of the day to my wife and my infant. He already formed our delight.

In proportion as the good milk of our young Burgundian made health flow in his veins, we saw the flesh become round and firm on his little body, and on all his delicate limbs; we saw his face assume a rosy colour and embellish itself. We thought too that we saw his little soul develope itself, and his intelligence begin to unfold. Already he seemed to understand us, and began to know us: his smile and his voice replied to the smile to the voice of his mother; I saw him pleased too with my caresses. His tongue soon essayed those first words of nature, those names so sweet, that from the lips of the child go strait to the heart of the father and the mother.

I never shall forget the moment when, in our garden at Saint Brice, my child, who had not yet dared to walk without his leading-strings, seeing me three steps from him on my knees, disengaged himself from the nurse's arms, and, with unsteady feet, but resolute, came to throw himself into my arms. I know very well that the emotion I felt at that instant is a pleasure that kind nature has rendered common. But wo to those corrupt hearts that need rare and artificial impressions in order to be moved! A lady of our acquaintance said, in ridicule of me, "He fancies there is no father in the world but himself." No, I do not pretend that paternal love has delights for me that others may not share; but, were this common happiness granted only to me, I should not be more alive to it. My wife was not less so to the first pleasures of maternal love; and you may conceive that, with our child in our arms, we neither of us wished for any other amusements, or any other society.

At the same time our family, and some of our friends used to come and see us on holidays. The Abbé Maury was of the number; and you should have heard how he gloried in having foretold our happiness. We sometimes too saw our neighbours, the rector of Saint-Brice, the good Latour, and his worthy wife, who loved mine.

We often took solitary walks; and the end of these walks was usually that chesnut wood at Montmorency which Rousseau has rendered famous.

"It is here," used I to say to my wife, "that he imagined that romance of *Héloïse*, in which he has employed so much art and eloquence to give to vice the hue of honesty and the tint of virtue."

My wife was partial to Rousseau; she felt infinitely grateful to him for having persuaded women to suckle their children, and for having used his efforts to render the first age of life gentle and happy. "We may pardon him something," used she to say, "who has taught us to be mothers."



But I, who had only seen in the conduct and in the writings of Rousseau a perpetual contrast of beautiful language and vile morality; I who had seen him announce himself the apostle, and the martyr of truth, and abuse it incessantly with adroit sophisms; deliver himself by calumny from the gratitude that oppressed him; choose in his savage spleen, and in his sinister visions, the falsest colours to blacken his friends; defame those men of letters whom he had most reason to praise, in order to signalize himself alone, and eclipse them all; I made my wife feel, by the good itself that Rousseau had done, all the evil that he might have abstained from doing, if, instead of employing his art to serve his passions; to colour his hatred, his revenge, his cruel ingratitude, to give specious appearances to his calumnies, he had worked on himself to subjugate his pride, his irascible temper, his dark distrust, his contemptible animosities, and to become again, what nature had made him, innocently feeling, equitable, sincere, and good.

My wife listened to me sorrowfully. One day she said to me; "my friend, I am sorry to hear you so often speak ill of Rousseau. You will be accused of being excited against him by some personal enmity, and perhaps by a little envy."

—"As to personality in my aversion," said I to her, "that would be very unjust, for he has never offended me, nor has he done me any injury. It would be more possible that there should be envy in it, for I admire him enough in his writings to be envious of him; and I should accuse myself of being so, if I ever surprised myself in defaming him. But I experience, on the contrary, in speaking to you of the maladies of his soul, that bitter sorrow which you feel in hearing me."—"Why then," replied she, "in your writings, in your conversations, treat him with such severity? Why insist on his vices? Is there not impiety in disturbing the ashes of the dead?"

—"Yes, the ashes of the dead," said I to her, "who have left no dangerous example, whose memory is not pernicious to the living. But should sweetened poisons, in the writings of an eloquent sophist, and of a seducing corrupter, should the fatal impressions he has made by specious calumnies, should all the contagion that a celebrated talent has left, be suffered to pass current under favour of the respect which we owe to the dead, and perpetuate itself from age to age? Most certainly I will oppose to it, either as preservatives or as counterpoisons, all the means in my power; and were it only to clear the memory of my friends from the spots with which he has sullied it, I will do no more than leave, if I can, to the proselytes and enthusiasts that are still left him, the choice of thinking that Rousseau was either mad or malicious. They will accuse me of being envious. But a crowd of illustrious men, to whom I have rendered the justest and the purest homage, will attest that in my writings envy has never obscured justice and truth. Whilst Rousseau was living, I spared him, because he had need of men, and I would not injure him. He is now no more; and I owe no in-

indulgence to the reputation of a man who has indulged none, and who, in his memoirs, has defamed the men who most loved him."

With respect to *Héloïse*, my wife was sensible of the danger of its morality; and what I have said of it in my *Essai sur les Romains* needed no apology. But had I always so severely condemned the art which Rousseau had employed to render interesting the crime of Saint-Preux, the crime of Julie, the one seducing his pupil, the other abusing the good faith, the probity of Wolmar? No, I confess it; and my morality, in my new position, favoured of the influence that our personal interests have on our opinions and on our feelings.

In living in a world where public morals are corrupted, it is difficult not to contract at least some indulgence for certain fashionable vices. Opinion, example, the seductions of vanity, and above all the allurements of pleasure, impair, in young hearts, the rectitude of genuine feeling: the light air and tone with which old libertines have the art of turning into jest the scruples of virtue, and of converting into ridicule the rules of delicate integrity, imperceptibly destroy the serious importance that the young mind was wont to attach to them. Marriage, above all, had cured me of this softness of conscience.

What do I say? None but a husband, a father, can judge sanely of those contagious vices that attack morals in their source, of those gentle and pernicious vices that bring trouble, shame, hatred, desolation, despair, into the bosom of families.

A bachelor, insensible to those afflictions that are foreign to him, neither thinks of the tears he will cause, nor of the fury and revenge he will excite in a wounded heart. Wholly occupied, like the spider, in spreading his nets, and watching the instant for enveloping his prey, he either effaces from his moral code respect for the most holy rights, or, if they ever recur to his memory, he considers them as laws that are fallen into disuse. What so many others permit themselves to do, or applaud themselves for having done, appears to him, if not lawful, at least excusable. He thinks he may enjoy the licence of the morals of the times.

But when he has put himself in the number of those whom the seductions of an adroit corrupter may render wretched for life; when he sees that the artifices, the flattering and enticing language of a young fop have only to surprise the innocence of a daughter, or the weakness of a wife, to ruin the peace of the most virtuous man, and his own perhaps one day; warmed by his personal interest, he feels how essentially the honour, the faith, the sanctity of conjugal and domestic morals are to a father, to a husband, inviolable rights; and it is then that he sees, with a severe eye, all that is criminal and dishonourable in profligate manners, with whatever decoration eloquence may clothe it, and under whatever exterior of virtue and decorum an industrious writer may disguise it.

I therefore blame Rousseau; but in blaming him I grieve that

splenetic passions, a sombre pride, and vain glory, should have spoiled a fund of such beautiful feeling.

If I had had the passion of celebrity, two great examples would have cured me of it, that of Voltaire, and that of Rousseau; examples very different, quite opposite in many respects, but agreeing in this point, that the same thirst of praise and renown was the torment of their lives.

Voltaire, whom I had just seen expire, had sought glory by all the roads that are open to genius, and had deserved it by immense labours and brilliant successes. But on all these roads he had encountered envy, and all the furies by whom she is escorted. Never did a man of letters bear so much outrage, without any other crime than great talents and the ardour of signalizing them. Those who envied him fancied they could be his rivals by shewing themselves his enemies: those whom in his way he trod under his feet, still insulted him as they lay. His whole life was a contest, and he was indefatigable in it. The combat was not always worthy of him; and he had more insects to crush than serpents to strangle. But he never could either disdain or provoke offence: the vilest of his assailants have been branded with his hand: the arm of ridicule was the instrument of his vengeance, and he wielded it most fearfully and cruelly. But the greatest of blessings, repose, was unknown to him. It is true that envy at last appeared tired of the pursuit, and began to spare him on the brink of the grave. On his return to Paris, after a long exile, he enjoyed his renown and the enthusiasm of a whole people, grateful for the pleasures that he had afforded them. The weak and last effort that he made to amuse them, *Irène*, was applauded as *Zaire* had been; and this representation, at which he was crowned, was for him the most delightful triumph. But at what a moment did this tardy consolation reach him, the recompence of so much watching! The next day I saw him in his bed. "Well," said I, "are you at last satiated with glory?"—"Ah! my good friend," he replied, "you talk to me of glory, and I am dying in frightful torture!"

Such was the end of one of the most illustrious of all literary men, and one of the most engaging of all social companions. He was alive to injury, but so he was to friendship. That with which he honoured my youth was unvaried till his death, and a last proof that he shewed me of it was the reception, full of grace and kindness, which he gave my wife, when I presented her to him. His house was perpetually filled with the crowd that pressed to see him, and we were witnesses of the fatigue he gave himself to reply suitably to each. That continual attention exhausted his strength; and for his true friends it was a painful spectacle. But we were of his suppers, and there we enjoyed the last glimmerings of that brilliant intellect which was soon to be wholly extinguished.

Rousseau was wretched like him, and for the same passion. But the ambition of Voltaire had a fund of modesty: you may see it in his letters; whereas that of Rousseau was coupled with vanity; the proof of it is in his writings.

I had seen him in the society of the most estimable men of letters, welcomed and esteemed: that was not enough for him; their celebrity shaded him; he thought them jealous of him. Their kindness was suspicious to him. He began by disturbing, and ended by blackening them. He had friends in spite of himself: their benevolence was importunate to him. He received their favours; but he accused them of wishing to humble, to dishonour, to defame him; and he returned their beneficence with the most odious defamation.

He was never spoken of in society but with tender interest. Even criticism itself was for him full of respect, and tempered with eulogies. He would say, it was but the more adroit and perfidious. In the most tranquil repose, he always chose to fancy or to say that he was persecuted. His disease was to imagine, in the most fortuitous events, in the most common occurrences, some intention of injuring him, as if in the world all the eyes of envy had been fixed on him. If the Duke of Choiseul had conceived the conquest of Corsica, it was in order to take from him the glory of being its legislator. If the same duke went to sup, at Montmorency, with the Duchess of Luxembourg, it was to usurp the place that he was wont to occupy near her at table. Hume, he would say, had been envious of the reception which the Prince de Condé had given him. He never pardoned Grimm for having had some preference over him at Madame d'Epinay's; and you may see in his memoirs how his cruel vanity revenged this offence.

Thus for Voltaire and for Rousseau life had been perpetually, but differently agitated. For the one it had often had the sharpest pains, but some very lively enjoyments; for the other, it was one continued flood of bitterness, without any mixture of joy or sweetness. Most certainly at no price would I have wished for the condition of Rousseau; he could not endure it himself; and after having poisoned his days, I am not at all surprised that he has voluntarily abridged their duration.

As for Voltaire, I confess that I likewise found his glory too dearly paid by all the tribulations it had exposed him to, and I said, again and again, less lustre and more quiet.

Limited in my ambition, first by the necessity of adapting my flight to the feebleness of my wings, and then again by the love of that tranquillity of mind and soul which accompanies peaceful employment, and which I believed to be the lot of humble mediocrity, I should have been contented in that happy state. Thus, early renouncing all presumptuous attempts, I had as it were capitulated with envy, and reduced myself to that kind of writing in which success is pardoned without difficulty. I was not the more spared for it; and I found that little things still inspire, in little souls, an envious malignity.

But I had adopted two principles: one, never to provoke in my writings offence by offence; the other, to despise attack and never to reply to it. I was misunderstood for thirty years in my resolution; yet all the rage of the Frérons, the Auberts, and their associates, had not irritated me against them. Why then

was I less passive at the moment of the dispute on music? It is that I was not the only one insulted by my adversaries, and that I had to revenge an artist inhumanly attacked in his dearest interests.

Piccini had a wife and numerous family that subsisted on the fruit of his labour: his peaceful and gentle character rendered him still more interesting. I saw him alone, without intrigue, exerting every effort to please a public new to him; and I saw at the same time a pitiless cabal assailing him with fury, like a swarm of wasps. I expressed my indignation at it; the cabal became irritated, and the wasps turned all their stings against me.

The chiefs of the cabal had a press at their orders, to print their pleasantries, and a newspaper to spread it abroad. I was every day insulted in it. I had not the same convenience for defending myself; and, had I had it, this sorry warfare would not have accorded with my taste. However, I determined to amuse myself in my turn; for to be angry at raillery would have been playing a wretched character.

I conceived a plan for putting their intrigue in action, and for painting them to the life, having only to put their own language into rhyme, in order to render them ridiculous. They printed their prose, I recited my verses; and every day, it was who should make the circle of his friends laugh most.

It is thus that my poem on music was composed for the defence of Piccini: perhaps I should have done better to have confided the cause to *Roland*, *Atys*, *Didon*, &c.; but I have not always done what prudence would have dictated, and I confess that on this occasion I did not think his injury and my own sufficiently revenged by the silence of contempt. And if, of a dispute so frivolous and ephemeral, I have made a poem in twelve cantos, it is that the incidents engaged me to it by insensible gradations. I might, I confess, have employed my time better; but my habitual labours required some relief, and my moments of amusement and recreation were all that I gave to *Polyhymnia*.

During my residence at Saint-Brice an event of a more serious nature occurred. It was the retreat of M. Necker from the ministry. I have already said that his character was by no means seducing. He had never given me reason to think him my friend. I was not his. But as he shewed me as much esteem and kindness as I could expect from a man so coldly polite, and as on my part I had a high opinion of his talents, of his knowledge, of the ambition he had shown to signalise himself in his place by benefiting the state, I was grieved at his retreat.

I had besides, for Madame Necker, the sincerest veneration; for in her I had seen only kindness, prudence, and virtue; and the particular affection with which she honoured me well deserved that I should take interest in an event which I did not doubt most truly affected her.

When I heard of it at Saint-Brice, imagining they had already retired to their country house at Saint-Ouën, I instantly went thither. They had not yet arrived; and, pursuing my road, I was

going to their house in Paris. I met them on my way. "Were you coming to see us?" said Necker to me; "get into our carriage, and come to Saint-Ouën." I accompanied them there. We were alone the whole evening with Germani, Necker's brother, and neither the husband, nor the wife, concealed from me their deep sorrow. I endeavoured to soothe it by speaking of the regret they would leave in the public mind, and of the just consideration which would follow them in their retreat; in which I did not flatter them. "I only regret," said Necker to me, "the good I had to do, and that I should have done, if time had been given me for it."

For my part, I said, in his situation, I saw only an honourable retreat; an independent fortune, tranquillity, liberty, occupations of which he would have the choice, a society composed of those who are neither attracted by favour nor repelled by misfortune; and, in his home, all that retired and domestic life can have most grateful to a wise man. But I confess that I spoke after my own feelings, rather than after his; for I readily conceived that, without the occupation of public affairs, and the influence which they give, he could not be happy. His wife appeared touched with the pains I took to enfeeble the impression which this blow had made. Thus, my connection with them, very far from being weakened by this event, was but the more intimate for it.

My wife, for my sake, returned their offers of friendship, and accepted their invitations. But she had for M. Necker an insurmountable aversion. She had come from Lyons in the persuasion that M. Necker was the cause of the disgrace of M. Turgot, the benefactor of her family. And, with respect to Madame Necker, she did not find in her that inviting air which she herself had with her friends.

Very different and much more engaging was another Geneva lady, the beautiful Vermenoux, the most intimate friend of M. and Madame Necker. Since I had become acquainted with her, at the house of this couple, whom she had united, I had cultivated her friendship. But the tenderness for my wife, since my marriage, was a new tie for us.

Madame de Vermenoux, at first sight, was the image of Minerva, but there soon shone, on this imposing countenance, that air of kindness, of gentleness, that serenity, that genuine and decent gaiety that embellishes reason, and makes wisdom enchanting. The affection which she and my wife mutually conceived for each other, was sympathy, if by that you understand only the perfect accord of minds, of tastes, and of morals. With what pleasure did this woman, habitually solitary, and naturally reserved, see us arrive at her country-house at Seves! With what joy did her soul resign itself to the sweets of intimacy, and cheerfully expand at the little suppers that we used to go and make with her at Paris! Still young enough to relish life, death tore her from us. But, in regretting her, I have since discovered that, had her days been prolonged, they would only have been filled with sorrow and bitterness. A little later, she would have lived too long.

Let us return to Saint-Brice, and to the tender interest that occupied me and my wife there at that moment ; it was her new pregnancy. The good air, the exercise, the regular life of the country, had been favourable to her ; and winter having brought us back to Paris, she was there delivered of the finest of her children. Thus, for us, all seemed still to prosper ; and, till then, nothing could be more grateful than the life we led.

*Atys*, in spite of envy, had the same success that *Roland* had experienced : and the beautiful airs of these operas, sung at the harpsichord, formed the delight of our society at the concerts of the countess d'Hondetot, and of her sister-in-law, Madame de la Briche.

This last lady, well skilled in music, a charming singer, though her voice was feeble, had the singular modesty to assemble at her house talents that effaced her own ; and, far from shewing the least jealousy of them, she was the first to make them shine. A perfect model of correctness, without any affectation, easy in her politeness, facile in her conversation, ingenuous in her gaiety, recounting well, talking well, she was simply and naturally engaging. Her language and her style were pure and even elegant ; but, tender as far as friendship, nothing passionate ever interrupted the mildness and equality of her soul. She was by no means the woman you would have desired in order to be strongly moved, but you would have chosen her to enjoy a tranquil happiness.

In speaking of my old societies, I have said that I had seen M. Turgot there ; but whether it be that our manners and our characters did not sufficiently agree, or that my acquaintance with M. Necker displeased him still more, he had uniformly shewn me a particular coldness. However, as an old friend of the Abbé Morellet, he had been taking some interest in my marriage ; and I was indebted to my wife for some marks of his kindness : I returned them with so much the more respect, because he was disgraced, and because I saw that he felt his disgrace.

At the same time I was losing successively my old friends. The Swedish ambassador, recalled home to his king to be his confidential minister, was torn from me for ever. The Neapolitan ambassador quitted us to go and be viceroy in Sicily. Both these separations were so much the more painful to me, because they were to be eternal. Caraccioli's letters were full of regret. He perpetually invited me into Sicily with my family, offering to send me a vessel to Marseilles, in order to transport us to Palermo.

I have said what was for forty years my friendship for d'Alembert, and what value I set on his. After the death of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, he was a prey to melancholy and to sorrow. But sometimes he would comfort his heart's deep wound with some drops of the balm of this consoling friendship. It was, above all, with my wife that he loved to divert his cares. My wife took the tenderest interest in them. He and Thomas, the two men of letters, whose talents and whose knowledge ought to have most imposed on her, were those with whom she was most at her ease. She preferred no amusement to their conversation.

Thomas appeared to have still a long time to live for glory and for friendship.

But d'Alembert began to feel the torments of the stone; and he soon existed only to suffer, and die slowly in the most cruel pains.

In a feeble sketch of his eulogy, I have assayed to paint the mild equality of his character, always true, always simple, because it was natural, removed from all boasting, from all concealment, *with a mixture of force and feebleness, but whose force was virtue, and whose feebleness was benevolent feeling.*

In lamenting his loss, I was far from thinking of succeeding him in the place of perpetual secretary of the French academy. I was myself on the point of following him to the tomb, seized with a malignant fever, similar to that of which Bouvard had already cured me, and in which he saved me again. How infinitely should I bless the memory of a man to whom I have twice owed my life, and who, till the total failure of his strength and spirits, never ceased to bestow the tenderest cares on my children!

I had scarcely begun to recover when I was obliged to go to Fontainebleau, to give the new opera that I had written with Piccini. This opera was *Didon*. As it was entirely my own, I had framed it to my mind; and, to make our new music advance a step farther, I had profited by the moment when a mark of favour, granted to Piccini, had given new life to his genius. I must tell you what had passed.

In the beginning of this year (1783), Marshal Duras, gentleman of the king's chamber in waiting, asked me if I had written nothing new, and expressed to me his desire of having a good opera to give to the queen as a novelty at Fontainebleau. "But," said he, "I should wish it to be your work. You do not gain enough credit by your exertions to give a graceful and pleasing dress to Quinault." In this language I recognized my brother-member of the academy, and his former kindness for me.

"Marshal," said I, "so long as my composer, Piccini, shall be discouraged as he now is, I can promise nothing. You know with what madness his enemies disputed his success in *Roland* and *Atys*; these pieces have both been fortunate; and so far true talent has triumphed over cabal; but in *Iphigénie en Tauride* he has sunk under oppression, although he had there surpassed himself.

The director of the opera, de Vismes, to augment his receipts by the competition of the two parties, conceived the project of making Gluck and Piccini contend for the palm on the same subject; he furnished them two poems of *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Gluck, in the barbarous poem that fell to his lot, has found horrors analogous to the energy of his style, and he has expressed them strongly. The poem given to Piccini, ill conceived as it was, appeared susceptible of a milder interest; and, by means of the corrections which the author had made in it under my direction, it might furnish scenes for touching music. But, after the strong impression which Gluck's ferocious opera had made on the eyes and ears of the public, the emotions produced by Piccini's opera



seemed light and trivial. Gluck's *Iphigénie* has full possession of the theatre; that of Piccini is forgotten; he is disheartened; and you alone, marshal, can raise him from his dejection."—"How can that be effected?" asked he.—"By doing something very easy and very just," I answered. "By changing into a pension for life the annual gratifications that was promised him, when he was engaged to come to France."—"Most willingly," replied "the marshal; I will ask this favour for him of the queen, and I hope to obtain it."

He asked it; it was granted him; and when Piccini went with me to thank him for it, "It is to the queen," said he, "that you must shew your gratitude, by writing a good opera for her this year."

"I should be very glad to do so," said Piccini to me on our return: "but what opera shall we write?"—"We must write," answered I, "the opera of *Didon*: I had long had the plan of it in my head. But I advertise you that, in this work, I shall choose to give the reins to my fancy, that you will have long scenes to set to music, and that in these scenes I shall require from you a recitative as natural as simple declamation. Your Italian cadences are monotonous: speech is more varied, more nervous in its accents, and I shall pray you to note it as I shall declaim it to you."—"Well," said he, "we shall see." Thus was formed the design of giving to recitation that facility, that truth of expression, which was so favourable to the playing of the celebrated actress for whom the part of *Didon* was destined.

We were pressed for time: I wrote the poem very rapidly; and, to steal Piccini from the interruptions of Paris, I engaged him to come and work with me at my country-house; for I had purchased a very agreeable one, where we lived assembled *en famille* during the summer months. On arriving, he began to compose; and when he had finished, the actress who was to play the part of *Didon*, Saint Huberti, was invited to come and dine with us. She sang her part from one end to the other at sight, and expressed it so well, that I fancied I saw her on the stage.

She was going on a journey into Provence: she insisted on taking her part with her, to study it as she went along; and, during her absence, we were occupied with the rehearsals. It was then that I suffered that malady which brought me so near the tomb. When it became necessary for me to go to Fontainebleau, I had not recovered my strength, and my wife, still alarmed for my health, chose to accompany me.

It was there that, in dining at Madame de Beauveau's, I first heard the design my friends had formed of obtaining for me that place of secretary of the academy, which d'Alembert had rendered so difficult to fill after him.

This difficulty, which might well have intimidated the vainest man, was not the only one that withheld me. The place required an assiduity, of which I believed myself incapable. It was then very sincerely that I refused the honour they were pleased to do me. But they opposed to me motives to which I thought myself obliged to yield; and it was decided that I should be of the num-

her of candidates for the place. But I determined not to solicit for it.

Circumstances were favourable to me for the suffrages of the court. The success of *Didon* was complete; and, to the eulogies that were made on the music of Piccini, were added some praises for the author of the poem. "It is the only opera," said the king, "that ever interested me." He commanded it twice.

I was touched with this success; my wife enjoyed it; and her enjoyment was what most interested me. Our journey had for her an inexpressible charm. The walks in the forest, the hunting parties, the races, the parties of pleasure to Tomeri, where they gave us sumptuous *matelottes* for dinner, and excellent grapes for our dessert; at the theatre every day, in the box of Madame d'Angiviller, whose house was ours, and who vied with her husband in gracefully attracting to us the attention of the numerous and distinguished company with which her drawing-room incessantly abounded; in short, all the pleasures that a young and magnificent court could unite, and all that could personally prove to my wife that she was esteemed and beloved in the society that surrounded the court; all this, I say, made our stay at Fontainebleau a scene of continued enchantment.

Two incidents caused us some uneasiness there; the first was an appearance of relapse, and some remains of the fever that I felt at the beginning of my journey. The court physicians could have made a disease of it, if my wife had believed them. But, without any of their remedies, and by making me breakfast every morning off a basket of fine grapes, she restored me to health. The other incident was the small-pox of Albert, whom we had brought with us. But the eruption not having declared itself till we were about to return, we set off instantly; and Albert was put into the hands of our friend Bouvard, who took the same care of him that he would have taken of his own child.

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## BOOK XI.

ON our return to Paris, the French academy having been convoked for the election of its perpetual secretary; of twenty-four elective voices, eighteen were united in my favour. My two competitors were Bouzée and Suard.

The success of *Didon* was the same at Paris as it had been at the court; and this opera formed our winter pleasures, as *Roland* and *Atys* had done, in their novelty.

The old court banker, M. de la Borde, added his concerts to those of the Countess d'Houdetot and of Madame de la Briche: this was the occasion of my acquaintance with him.

He had two daughters, to whom nature had granted all the

charms of face and of voice, and who, pupils of Piccini, rendered the expression of his song more sweet and more affecting.

Engaged by the invitations of M. de la Borde, I went to see him; I sometimes dined with him: I saw him honourable, but simple, enjoying his prosperity without pride, without boasting, with an equality of soul that is the more estimable, because it is very difficult to be so caressed by fortune without a little giddiness. How many favours had heaven heaped upon him! Great opulence, a universal reputation for rectitude and loyalty, the confidence of Europe, unbounded credit; and at home, six well-bred children, a wife of a sage and gentle mind, of a lovely disposition, of a decency and a modesty that had nothing studied in them; exemplary in her attentions to her husband and children; and such, in short, as envy itself found irreproachable.

Che non trova l'invidia ove l'emende. ARIOSTO.

What was wanting to the wishes of a man so completely happy? He has perished on the scaffold, without any other crime than his riches, and in that multitude of honest men whom a wicked villain hurried to the grave. That dreadful calamity did not yet threaten us, and in my humble mediocrity I then thought myself happy. My country-house had, in summer, still more charms for me than town had ever had. A chosen society, composed to the taste of my wife, came successively to vary our leisure, and enjoy with us that rustic opulence that our gardens offered us, where the espalier, the orchard, the vine-arbour, the kitchen-garden, furnished us with the fruits and the vegetables of every season; presents with which nature covered without cost a frugal table, and which changed a moderate dinner into a delicious feast.

There reigned innocent joy, confidence, a liberality of thought, whose limits all knew, and no one ever abused.

Shall I name to you all the guests that friendship assembled there? Raynal, the most affectionate, the most animated of old men; Silésia, that Genoese philosopher who resembled Vauvenargue; Barthélemi, who, in our walks, made us think of those of Plato with his disciples; Bréquigny, who had likewise that amenity and that antique wisdom; Carbury, the man of all times and of all countries for the rich variety of his mind and of his knowledge; Boismont, a complete Frenchman in his manners, but singular for the contrast between his engaging qualities in society and his talents in the pulpit; Maury, prouder of diverting us with a pleasant story, than of astonishing us by a trait of eloquence, and who, in company, made us forget the man of learning to shew only the man of inviting converse; Godard, who had also a charming flow of gaiety full of wit; De Seze, who soon came to give to our conversations a still bolder flight and new allurements.

"We are too happy," said my wife; "some misfortune will happen to us." She was very right! Learn, my dear children, how near grief is to joy in all the situations of life.

This kind and feeling mother had suckled her third child. He was a fine boy, full of health: we thought we had only to see him grow, and give more delight, when suddenly he was seized with a

mortal stupor. Bouvard hastens to his aid; he employs, he exhausts his art to find a remedy for this fatal drowsiness. The child had his eyes open; but Bouvard perceived that the iris was dilated: he passed a candle near it; the eyes and the eye-lids remained motionless. "Ah," said he to me, "the organ of sight is palsied; the humour has attacked the brain; there is now no remedy;" and in saying these words the good old man wept; he felt the blow with which he crushed a father's heart.

In that cruel moment, I could have wished to remove the mother. But on her knees, by the bed of her child, her eyes filled with tears, her arms extended towards heaven, suffocated with her sobs: "Let me," said she, "ah! let me at least receive his last sigh." And how her sobs, her tears, her cries redoubled when she saw him expire! I say nothing of my own grief; I can think only of her's. It was so profound that, for many years, she had not the force to hear its object named. If she spoke of it herself, it was only in confused terms: *since my misfortune*, would she say; unable to resolve to articulate, *since the death of my child*.

In the sad situation in which my mind and soul both were, with what could I occupy myself that was not analogous to maternal love and to conjugal tenderness? My heart full of those feelings, of which I had before me the most touching model, I conceived the design of the opera of *Pénélope*. This subject seized on me; the more I meditated on it, the more I thought it susceptible of great musical effect, and of theatrical interest.

I wrote with ardour, and in all the illusion that a pathetic subject can create in him who portrays the picture. But it was this illusion that deceived me. I first persuaded myself that the fidelity of conjugal love would have on the lyric stage as much interest as the intoxication and the despair of *Didon's* love; I persuaded myself too that in a subject, wholly in situations, in pictures, in theatrical effects, all would be executed as in my fancy, and that the correspondent parts, the probabilities, the dignity of the action would be observed there just as I had traced them to bad decorators, and to awkward actors. The contrary happened; and, in the most interesting moments, all illusion was destroyed. Thus the beautiful music of Piccini lost almost all its effect. Saint-Huberti sustained it, as admirable in the part of *Pénélope* as she had been in that of *Didon*. But, though she was applauded as often as she occupied the scene, she was so weakly supported that, neither at court nor at Paris, had this opera the success which I had flattered myself it would have experienced; and the fault was mine. I ought to have known on what inept people I made the success of such a work depend, and not to have reckoned on it after what I have said of *Zémire et Azor*.

I had not been happier in the choice of a subject for a comic opera that I had written with Piccini for the Italian theatre; and when I think of it, I can scarcely conceive how I was seduced by the *Dormeur Eveillé*, which in the *Mille et une Nuits* might be amusing, but which had nothing comic. For the true comic consists in playing with a ridiculous character; and that of Assan is not so.

In general, after successes, we should expect to find the public

more difficult and more severe. This is a reflection which I did not make often enough: I became more confident when I ought to have been more timid; and at the theatre my vanity was punished by disgraces.

I experienced more indulgence at the public assemblies of the academy: there I by no means courted applause; I spoke there only to fulfil the simple functions of my place, or to supply the absent. If I sometimes paid in my turn the tribute due to a man of letters, it was without ostentation. The literary pieces that I read there had nothing ambitious. They were the fruit of my studies and of my reflections on taste, on language, on the caprices of custom, on style, on eloquence, all subjects suited to the spirit of an auditory composed of academicians, and of those who were habituated to such discourses. Thus this auditory was always benevolent; and I fancied myself in the midst of a circle of friends.

This favour, which I enjoyed in our public assemblies, joined to the exact discipline I imposed, without any partiality, in our private sittings, gave me some weight there and considerable credit. The clergy were grateful to me for the respect that was shown them there; the high nobility were not less satisfied with the customary honours that were paid to them by my example; and, with respect to men of letters, they knew I was so jealous of academic equality, that they left to me the care of recalling its rights, if any one had forgotten them. Many even, persuaded that in our elections I only sought what was best, would consult and vote with me. Thus, without courting favour, and without intrigue, I had some influence, and I employed it, as justice prompted, to conquer the obstacles that were eagerly opposed to the election of one of my friends.

The Abbé Maury, in his youth, having preached at the Louvre with great success the panegyric of Saint Louis before the French academy, and afterward that of Saint Augustin at the assembly of the clergy of France, soon famous in the pulpits of Paris, and called to preach before the king at Versailles during Christmas and Advent, had acquired incontestible titles to the French academy; and he did not dissemble that such was the object of his ambition.

It was then that the rumours of calumny rose against him; and, as they were intended for the ears of the academy, his enemies took care to address them directly to its secretary. I listened to all the evil that they were pleased to tell me of him; and when I had patiently heard it, taking him aside; "You are attacked," said I, "and it is I that must defend you; but it is you that must furnish me with arms to repulse your enemies." I then explained to him, article by article, all the wrongs that were attributed to him. He listened to me without being disconcerted; and, with a facility that astonished me, he refuted these accusations, demonstrating to me the falsity of some, and putting me in the way of verifying the rest myself.

The only one that he could at first but vaguely deny, because it was vague, was brought against him by an academician who accu-

sed him of perfidy and vile calumny. The accuser was La Harpe, with whom he had been on terms of intimacy.

"Since he accuses me of perfidy," said the Abbé Maury to me, "I should have a right to demand of him its proof. I will not insist on it, and I will myself undertake to prove that he calumniates me, provided he will explain himself, and particularize the facts. Confront me with him."

I proposed this interview, and the accuser accepted it. But I did not wish to be the only witness and arbiter, and, in inviting them both to dine with me, I requested their permission to admit to this dinner two academicians who were most renowned for integrity and prudence, M. Thomas and M. Gaillard.

The dinner passed peacefully and decently. But when we had quitted the table, and were all five retired into my cabinet; "Gentlemen," said I to our two arbiters, "M. de la Harpe thinks he has reason to complain of M. l'Abbé Maury. The latter affirms that the complaint is not well founded. We are to hear them. Speak, M. de la Harpe; you shall be listened to in silence; and with the same attention M. l'Abbé Maury shall be heard after you."

The accusation was serious. It concerned a satire which the Abbé Maury should have advised a Russian, the friend of La Harpe, to write against him, during the time that they were all three of the same society. The Count de Schouvalof, the only witness that La Harpe could have produced, was gone back to Russia, and as he could not be heard, he could not be refuted.

The Abbé Maury, in his defence, was therefore reduced to discuss the accusation in itself, and to demonstrate by the attendant circumstances that it belied itself. And he did this with so much order, precision, clearness, with a presence of mind and of memory so marvellous, that we were confounded. In fine, in this discussion he pressed his adversary so closely, and with so much force, that the latter stood mute. The unanimous opinion of the three witnesses was then, that La Harpe had no just cause of complaint against the Abbé Maury; and before us, there was an appearance of reconciliation between them.

"I do not the less believe," said La Harpe to me, "what my friend Schouvalof has certified to me."—"You may believe it," I replied, but as an honest man you have no longer any right to say it; and, without reckoning my own opinion, that of two men so just, so impartial, as Thomas and Gaillard, ought to impose silence on you. As for myself, if I should hear your complaints repeated in society, you must not be offended at my recounting what has just passed at my house."

I took the same care to clear up all the other facts imputed to the Abbé Maury. I found them all imaginary, and not only void of proof, but destitute of probability. From that moment, it was in vain for his enemies to persist in speaking ill of him to me; I answered that, in praise as in satire, gratuitous epithets proved only the vileness of the flatterer or the malice of the calumniator; I even defied the malevolent to articulate a single fact that I should not be able to overthrow; and, with all my credit, I engaged my brother-members to console a great mind for a great persecution

by receiving him at the academy. He was elected; and from that time nothing was more intimate than our mutual friendship.

The Abbé Maury had in his character an excess of energy and of vehemence that he could with difficulty contain, but which he suffered me to moderate. When I found in him some impetuous emotions to repress, I blamed him for them with a frankness that sometimes warmed, but never irritated him. He was violent and gentle, and as just as feeling.

One day, in his impatience, he told me that I abused too much the ascendancy I had assumed over him. "I have not," said I, "nor will I have, any other ascendancy over you than that of reason animated by friendship; and if I use it, it is only to prevent you from injuring yourself. I know the goodness, the rectitude of your heart; but you have still too much fire and too much vigour in your head. Your mind is not ripe; and that sap that constitutes its force requires to be tempered. You know with what pleasure I praise in you all that is praise-worthy; with the same sincerity I will blame in you what is culpable; and when I conceive that a harsh truth is necessary to you, I esteem you too highly to think there is any need to soften it. Beside, it is thus that I understand friendship. If the condition displease you, you have only to say so, I will cease to indulge it." He only answered by embracing me.

"This is not all," resumed I: "this severity, which I consider it as my duty to observe with you, is likewise one from you to me; you have defects that are natural to force, and I have those of debility. The temper of your soul may give to mine more vigour and elasticity, and I desire you to pass over nothing in me that savours of weakness and timidity. Thus, as occasion may offer, I shall be able to give you counsels of prudence and moderation, and you will give me lessons of resolution and courageous firmness." The convention was reciprocal, and thus we dispelled the clouds that self-love or vanity would have raised between us.

The same year that my friend was received into the academy, it lost Thomas, one of its most illustrious members, and one of the most commendable of men for the integrity of his morals and the excellence of his writings.

*The integrity, the equality of an irreproachable life: a rare eulogy, my children! and who has merited this eulogy better than Thomas? It is very true that a part of it was due to nature. He was born prudent, and he had the prudence of all the ages of life. Temperate, sober and chaste, none of the vices of effeminacy, of luxury and of voluptuousness had access to his soul. No violent passion ever disturbed its tranquillity; he knew nothing of sensual pleasures but those which are innocent, and these again he enjoyed with an extreme reserve. All the force and vigour that the organ of thought and feeling had in him were united in one point, the love of truth, of justice, and of virtue, and the passion of glory. This was the mover, the spring of his soul, and the nurse of his eloquence.*

He lived in the social world, without ever resigning himself either to its frivolous tastes, or to its vain amusements: he spared

all weaknesses, and he had none. Alive to friendship, he cultivated it with care; but he wished it to be moderate; he cherished its ties; he would have dreaded its chain: it occupied the intervals of his labours, of his studies; but it stole nothing from them; and a silent solitude had for him charms that he often preferred to the commerce of his friends. He suffered himself to be loved, and as much as you chose; but his own love was always measured.

In common society he appeared timid; he was only indifferent to it. Conversation rarely fixed his attention to them. ~~Where~~ <sup>When</sup> he tête-à-tête, or in a little circle, where he could speak on some of the objects that he had meditated, he astonished by the elevation and the abundance of his ideas, and by the dignity of his eloquence. But in the crowd he hid himself, and his soul seemed then to retire from the public eye. At light and mirthful pleasantries he would sometimes smile; he never laughed. He looked at women only as a cold observer, as a botanist looks at the flowers of a plant, never as an amateur of beauty and the graces. So that the women used to say that his eulogies flattered less than the passionate and vehement abuse of Rousseau.

Thomas was by disposition and by principle a stoic, whose virtue would only have needed great trials. He would have been, I am persuaded, a Rutilius in exile, a Thræseas or a Seranus under Tiberius, better than a Seneca under Nero, a Marcus Aurelius on the throne. But, living in a time of calm, and under moderate reigns, fortune refused him both her high favours and extreme rigours. His prudence and his modesty had not to defend themselves against any of the seductions of prosperity; nor was constancy tried by any adversity. Free, exempt from the cares to which we expose ourselves by becoming husbands and fathers, he was proved by none of the great interests of nature. Isolated as much as a simple individual can be in social life, he had not even an enemy worthy of his anger.

It is only from his writings that you can form a high idea of his character. It is there that you find throughout the stamp of an upright heart, and of an elevated soul; it is there that the courage of truth, the love of justice, the eloquence of virtue shew themselves.

The French academy laid the foundation of Thomas's reputation, in proposing the eulogies of our great men for the prize of eloquence. No one in that career could either outstrip or equal him, and he surpassed himself in the eulogy of Marcus Aurelius. Elevation and depth were the characters of his mind. No orator ever better embraced or better penetrated his subjects. Before he commenced his eulogy, he began by studying the profession, the employment, the art in which his hero had signalized himself, and it is thus that he rehearsed the praises of Maurice of Saxony like a learned soldier; of Duguay-Trouin like a sailor; of Descartes like a mathematician; of d'Agnesseau like a lawyer; of Sully like a statesman; of Marcus Aurelius like a moral philosopher, equal in wisdom to Apollonius and to Marcus Aurelius himself. It is thus that, in designing only a preface to his eulogies, he composed.



under the name of essays, the most learned and the most beautiful treatises of historical morality, on the subject of the panegyrics that have been written in all times with more or less justice and truth, according to the manners of the age and the genius of the orators: a work which has not the celebrity it merits.

You may conceive that a continual tension and a monotonous loftiness were the defect of Thomas's writings. His eloquence wanted that which makes the charm of the eloquence of Fenelon and of Massillon in prose, of the eloquence of Virgil and of Racine in verse; the flow of a feeling heart and the interest it spreads. His style was grave, imposing, but not at all bewitching. It had all the character of masculine beauty; women would have desired some features of their own. He had copiousness, magnificence, but not variety, or ease; nor even the suppleness of the graces; and that which rendered him admirable for some moments became at length fatiguing and painful. He has been particularly reproached for exhausting his subjects, and for leaving nothing to the fancy of the reader; which might be in him a want of taste and address, but which, nevertheless, was a very rare excess of abundance.

At a time when I should myself have had so much need of a rigid and sincere censor, Thomas, much younger than I, had chosen me for his. I praised him with frankness, and often even with transport; but I did not conceal from him that I should have wished for more moderation and less monotony in his style. "You touch but one chord," said I; "it is true that it gives exquisite sounds; but are they varied enough?" He would listen to me with a modest and melancholy air, and, perhaps, would say to himself that my criticism was well founded. But the austerity of his morals had communicated itself to his eloquence: to render it more supple, he would have feared to enervate it.

It was not my fault that he did not employ more usefully the years he gave to his poem of the Czar. I shewed him clearly that his poem would want unity and interest in its action; and, in recalling to his mind all the models of epic poetry, "Homer?" said I, "has sung the anger of Achilles in the *Iliad*, and the return of Ulysses to Ithaca in the *Odyssey*; Virgil, the foundation of the Roman empire; Tasso, the deliverance of the Holy City; Milton, the fall of the first man; Voltaire, the conquest of France by Henri de Bourbon, the heir of the Valois; and you, what are you going to sing? what event, what principal action will be the form of your recitals? You will recount the travels of the Czar, his war with Charles the Twelfth, the disobedience and the death of his son, all factions destroyed in his states, military discipline established in his armies, arts and sciences transplanted into his empire, the city of Petersburg founded on the shores of the Baltic; and these are indeed materials for an historical poem, for oratory and panegyric; but I by no means discover in them the single and simple subject of an epic poem." He confessed that my objection was unanswerable; but if he had not, he said, a dramatic action to compose and decompose, he had in the Czar a very great character to paint. Before he consulted me, he had already composed

"Well," resumed he, "I will give him my portrait at full length." The *Bailli* de Crussol, his gentleman of the chamber, was ordered to get a good copy made, and the frame of it was decorated with attributes most honourable to me.

The reigning prince of Brunswick did not receive my homage less favourably; he answered it by a letter written with his own hand, and full of kindness, to which were joined two gold medals, struck in memory of his virtuous brother.

It was about this time that, during her fourth pregnancy, my wife agreed with me on the necessity of taking a house to ourselves. But, as the separation took place with the good consent of her uncles and her mother, we removed from them as little as possible. My wife was not insensible to the pleasure of finding herself at home, mistress of her own house. For my part, I felt, I confess, great comfort in living with the Abbé Morellet in complete independence; and he was himself much more at his ease with me. He had introduced into his house another niece, young, lovely, full of wit and accomplishments, now Madame Chéron, to whom my wife resigned her apartment. Thus all passed with the best understanding.

What rendered our new situation still more agreeable was the ease we derived from an increase of fortune. Without speaking of the profits of my works, and these profits were considerable, the place of secretary of the French academy, joined to that of historiographer of the royal buildings, which my friend M. d'Angiviller had procured for me on the death of Thomas, were worth one hundred and twenty guineas to me. My assiduity at the academy doubled there my fees for personal attendance. I had inherited, on the death of Thomas, half the pension of eighty guineas which he had enjoyed, and which was divided between Guillard and me, as that of Le Batteaux had been. My lodgings of secretary at the Louvre, and of historiographer at Versailles, which I had chosen to let, brought me together seventy-two guineas. I had one hundred and twenty on the *Mercur*e. Some of the money I had saved was advantageously placed in the enterprise of Swan Island; that which I had put in the customs of the city of Lyons gave me legal interest, as well as other sums which I had placed elsewhere. I therefore found myself enabled to live comfortably at Paris and in the country; and from that time I charged myself singly with the expense at Grignon. My wife's mother, her cousin, and her uncles, had each their room there whenever they chose to come; but they were my visitors.

I indulged myself with a carriage, that, three times a week, in an hour and half, took me from my country house to the Louvre, and, after the sitting of the academy, brought me back from the Louvre to my country house.

From that period, till the epoch of the revolution, I cannot express what attraction and what charm life and social intercourse had for us. My wife was happily delivered of her fourth child; M. and Madame d'Angiviller had stood godfather and godmother for it; they had made quite a *fête* of this christening, and had shewn us on this occasion the liveliest testimonies of tender friend-

ship. Their godson Charles became as dear to them as if he had been their own child.

A little time afterward, we made the fortunate acquisition of another society of friends in M. and Madame de Seze. My wife found, in Madame de Seze, all that a lovely disposition can have most enchanting: they therefore felt for each other that inclination which arises from the conformity of two kind and virtuous souls. With respect to M. de Seze, I do not believe that there is on earth a man whose society is more desirable than his. Gaiety, ingenuous, inviting and witty; a natural eloquence that, in conversation, even the most familiar, flowed in an abundant current; a quickness, a justness of thought and of expression, which at every moment seemed inspired; and, better than all, an open heart, full of rectitude, of sensibility, of kindness, of candour: such was the friend that the Abbé Maury had long taught me to desire, and that the vicinity of our country houses procured me.

From Brevane, where de Seze, in the pleasant season of the year, passed his moments of repose, from Brevane, I say, to Grignon, there was scarcely more than the Seine to pass and the plain which it waters; our two rising hills were facing each other. A young man whom we loved, and who loved us both, confided to us respectively the desire we mutually felt to become acquainted with each other. From our very first interviews, to see, to enjoy, to cherish each other, to desire to meet again, were their simultaneous effects; and, distant as we now are, this attachment is the same. At least, on my side, nothing in my solitude has more occupied me nor more interested me than he. De Seze is one of those rare men, of whom it may be said, you must love him if you have not loved him already; and when you shall have once loved him, you must love him for ever. *Cras amet, qui nunquam amavit; qui jam amavit, cras amet. (Catul.)*

The young man who had interested himself to unite us was that Labore, well famed, from the age of nineteen, for writings that would easily have been attributed to the maturity of mind and taste: a new friend, who, of his own accord, and by the impulse of an ingenuous and feeling soul, had come to offer himself to me, and whom I had soon learned to esteem and cherish.

In this engaging and happy character, the desire of rendering himself useful is an habitual and reigning passion. Full of ardour for all that he thinks virtuous, the quickness of his action equals that of his fancy. I never knew any one so economical of his time: he divided it into minutes, and every instant of it was either employed usefully to himself, or still oftener usefully to his friends.

The change of ministers again brought me some amelioration of fortune.

The salary of the historiographer of France, which had formerly been one hundred and twenty guineas, had been reduced to seventy-two, I know not by what miserable economy. The controller-general, d'Ormesson, thought it just to put it on its ancient footing.

It is well known that M. de Calonne, when he became minister of finance, announced his contempt for a narrow parsimony. He particularly wished that the labours of literary men should be honourably recompensed. In my quality of perpetual secretary of the French academy, he sent for me. He expressed to me his intention of favouring the academy; asked me whether there were any pensions annexed to it, as there were to the academy of sciences, and to the academy of belles-lettres; I answered him that there were none: to what might amount, for the most assiduous, the fees for personal attendance; I assured him that it could not exceed thirty or thirty-five guineas, each fee being but fifteen pence. He promised to double it. He desired to know what was the salary of the secretary; I answered, that it was fifty pounds. He thought it too little. He therefore obtained the king's permission to make the fee for being present half-a-crown, and to raise the salary of the secretary to one hundred and twenty guineas. Thus my revenue from the academy might amount to a hundred and eighty pounds or guineas.

I again obtained a new degree of favour and new hopes under the ministry of M. de Lamoignon, keeper of the great seal. The occasion of it was this.

One of the projects of this minister was to reform public instruction, and to render it flourishing. But, as he had not himself the knowledge necessary to form a plan and system of studies that should fulfil his intentions, he consulted the Abbé Maury, for whom he had much esteem and friendship. The Abbé, not thinking himself sufficiently informed on a subject which he had not particularly studied, advised him to apply to me, and the minister begged him to engage me to call on him. In the conversation that we had together, I saw that in general he conceived as a statesman, and in its full extent, the project I had formed. But the difficulties, the means, the details were not enough known to him. To assure us both whether I had well seized his plan, I begged his permission to develop it in a memorial which I would lay before him; but I observed to him, that, in reforms, nothing appeared to me more to be feared than the ambition of destroying all and reforming all; that I had much respect for ancient institutions; that I willingly submitted to the lessons of experience; and that I considered abuses errors, and passed faults as weeds that mix with the pure grain, and that should be rooted out with a light and prudent hand, that the harvest may not be injured.

My memorial was divided into eight principal articles: the distribution of the schools and of the objects of instruction according to general utility or local convenience; the establishments relative to both these objects; the discipline; the method; the gradual advancement and well-proportioned relation between the different classes; the general inspection; the means of encouragement; the knowledge and the employment of those who should have well completed their studies.

In the whole, and in the details of this vast composition, I had taken as my model the institution of the Jesuits, where all was

submitted to one single rule, inspecting, maintained, governed by one central authority, and put in action by one universal power. The greatest difficulty was to substitute for the tie of a religious society, and for the spirit which that tie animated, a motive of interest and a spring of emulation that should reduce liberty to terms of obedience. For the morals and discipline to be established in the class of the masters, as well as that of the pupils, was necessarily to be the bias of this institution. It was requisite then that the places there should be desirable, not only in their actual state, but for the prospect and the hopes they encouraged; and, in order that exclusion or dismission should be a punishment, I required that the continuance and duration of these honourable functions should progressively have assured advantages.

The keeper of the seal approved my plan in all its parts; and for what might require encouraging rewards, he promised me that nothing should be spared. "No master, if he be a man of merit, shall grow old in obscurity," said he; "no scholar, distinguished in his course of studies, shall remain without employment. You undertake to make me acquainted, from every extremity of the kingdom, with the choicest talents; and I engage to place them. I see that we understand each other," added he, pressing my hand; "we shall agree together; I depend on you, Marmontel; do you also depend on me, and for life."

As the Abbé Maury had assured me that the keeper of the seal was a just and frank man, I had no difficulty in forming with him the engagement which he proposed to me, and, in perfecting and completing the development of my plan, I thought I was labouring for his glory.

I had formed in the country an acquaintance, that, in this work, furnished me with great and important lights.

My fifth child, Louis, was just born, and his mother was his nurse. The eldest of the three that were left me, Albert, was in his ninth year; and Charles had completed his fourth, when I took the resolution of having them educated at home; and on the reputation of the school of Saint-Barbe, it was there that I chose for them a preceptor, formed by the morals and discipline of that house, as highly famed for the laborious and frugal life that was led there, as for the superiority of the powers with which its pupils were imbued.

The excellent young man that I had taken, and that death has torn from me, Charpentier, spoke incessantly in praise of Sainte-Barbe. For a remarkable singularity of that house was the tender affection that was preserved for it by those who had left it. He never spoke but with enthusiasm of the morals, of the discipline, of the studies of Saint-Barbe. He never spoke of the superiors of the house, and of the masters he left there, but with the profoundest esteem. They were his friends; he was desirous that I should make them mine. I permitted him to introduce them to me; and the cordiality with which I received them made my country-house agreeable to them.

Saint-Barbe had an annexed school at Gentilly, the adjoining

village to Grignon. The superiors and masters of both houses sometimes met to come and dine with me. They interested themselves in the studies of my children. On the days when the minor school at Gentilly had public exercises, my boys were invited to them, and were admitted to the examination. It was for them a good example, and an object of emulation. But for me it was a source of observation and light: for in the facile, regular, and constant course of the studies of Sainte-Barbe, I ought necessarily to find some cause, and this cause could only be a good and solid organization.

I took care to inform myself on this subject in the greatest detail; and by means of these conferences I imagined myself capable of giving the finishing touches to my plan of national instruction, when suddenly, by one of those commotions that overturned the ministry, M. de Lamoignon was dismissed, and exiled to Baviile.

Soon afterward the interests of the state, and anxiety for the fate of my country, seized on my mind; my private life changed its complection, and assumed a colouring that will necessarily spread itself over the rest of these memoirs.

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## BOOK XII.

I AM not writing the history of the revolution. *Quæ contentio divina et humana cuncta permiscuit, eoque recordiæ processit, ut studiis civilibus bellum finem faceret.* (Sallust. Jug.) But, if the life of man be a journey, can I recount mine without telling through what events, and by what torrents, what abysses, what wilds peopled by tigers and by serpents, it has passed. For it is thus that I retrace to myself our ten years of misfortunes, almost doubting whether it be not a violent and fatal dream.

This dreadful calamity will every where be described in traits of blood: the remembrance of it is but too indelible. But it has had causes whose nature cannot be sufficiently observed; for the diseases of the political resemble those of the human body: to judge with probability what will be their term, or what would have been their preventive, it is necessary to recur to their source; and it is thus that by the light of the past we may brighten the future.

Although the situation of public affairs and the fermentation of the public mind in every branch of the state had long appeared to threaten an approaching crisis, it is yet true that it only happened by the imprudence of those who persisted in thinking it impossible.

The nation, constantly faithful to its laws, to its kings, to its

ancient constitution, content by instinct with the portion of liberty, of property, of prosperity, of glory and of power which it enjoyed, did not cease to hope for some salutary amendment in the vices and errors of the ancient administration.

This hope had above all acquired fresh vigour on the accession of Lewis XVI to the crown. And indeed from that period, if the will of a young king full of rectitude and candour had been seconded as it ought to have been, all would have been repaired without convulsion.

Lewis the Sixteenth, raised to the throne at the age of twenty, brought with him a sentiment very precious when moderate, and very dangerous when excessive, the distrust of his own powers. The vice of his education had been the very reverse of that which is usually imputed to the education of princes: he had been too much intimidated; and, while his elder brother, the Duke of Burgundy, was living, he had been taught to feel too sensibly, on the side of intellect, the superiority which that truly premature prince had over him.

The situation of the dauphin, therefore, was the inquietude and perplexity of a mind that foresees its destiny and its duties, and dares not hope to be able to fulfil them, when he perceives himself suddenly charged with the government of an empire. His first feeling was alarm at finding himself king at twenty; his first impulse was to seek a man prudent and skilful enough to enlighten and to guide him. Such men are always rare; and to decide his choice, a choice more difficult perhaps than ever, the young king took counsel of his family. Nothing could be more important, both to the state and to himself, than the advice that should result from this deliberation. It was to determine who should begin his political education, direct his views, and form his ductile mind; and in him nature had disposed all to receive the impressions of virtue. A right understanding, sound reason, a fresh, ingenuous, and feeling soul, no vice, no passion, a contempt for luxury and ostentation, a hatred for falsehood and flattery, a thirst for justice and truth; and, with a little roughness and severity in his character, that fund of rectitude and moral goodness which is the basis of virtue; in a word, a king of twenty, detached from himself, disposed to desire all that should be good and just; and around him a kingdom to regenerate in all its parts, the greatest good to do, and the greatest evils to repair; this it was that awaited the confidential minister whom Lewis the Sixteenth should choose for his guide. He took the Count de Maurepas, (May 1774.)

After having been in the ministry for thirty years, after a long exile, and a still longer disgrace under the late king for a very trivial fault, and for which the royal family had never been offended with him, Maurepas had acquired in his retreat that consideration which age gives, and which unmerited misfortune commands, when sustained with decorum. His former ministry had only been marked by the decay of the navy; but as the timid policy of Cardinal Fleury had palsied that part of our forces, Maurepas might have been commanded to act as he did; and in a nominal place, dispensed with as a statesman, he had

had nothing to display but his natural qualities, the inviting ease of a man of the world, and the talents of a courtier.

Superficial, and incapable of any serious and profound application, but endowed with a facility of perception and intelligence that unravelled in an instant the most complicated business, he supplied in the council, by habit and dexterity, what he wanted in study and meditation. As inviting and gentle as his father was harsh and abrupt; with a supple, insinuating, and flexible mind, fertile in stratagem for attack, in address for defence, in subterfuge to illude, in shifts to divert, in witticisms to disconcert the serious by his pleasantry, in expedients to extricate himself from the most critical and serious difficulties; a keen and rapid eye to seize on the foibles or follies of men; an imperceptible art to intice them to his snare, or lead them to his end; an art, yet more formidable, of turning every thing into ridicule, even merit itself, when he wished to undervalue it; in fine, the art of enlivening and simplifying the labours of the cabinet, made Maurepas the most seducing of ministers; and had it only been requisite to teach a young king to wield the sceptre lightly and adroitly, to make a mockery of men and things, the duty of reigning an amusement, Maurepas would have been, without any comparison, the man they ought to have chosen. Perhaps the royal family had hoped that age and misfortune would have given to his character more solidity, consistence, and energy; but naturally feeble, indolent, and selfish; fond of ease and quiet; desirous that his age should be honoured, but tranquil; avoiding every thing that might sadden his suppers or disturb his slumber; scarcely believing in toilsome virtues, and looking on the pure love of the public good as dupery or idle boasting; little jealous of giving lustre to his ministry, and making the art of governing consist in conducting every thing without noise in consulting prudence rather than principle, Maurepas was in his age what he had been in his early years, an engaging man, occupied with himself, and a courteous minister.

A vigilant attention to preserve his ascendancy over the mind of the king, and his predominance in the council, made him easily jealous even of the choices he had himself made, and this anxiety was the only passion of his soul that had any activity. For all beside, he had no spring, no vigour, no courage, either for good or ill; it was weakness without benevolence, malice without venom, resentment without anger, indifference to all that should happen after him; he might perhaps be sincerely desirous of the public good, when he could effect it without risking his own quiet; but this desire was instantly cooled when he perceived it would compromise either his credit or his repose: such till the last moment was the aged minister who was chosen to guide and counsel the young king.

As it was easy for him to perceive that the basis of the character of the prince was frankness and benevolence, he first studied to appear to him benevolent and simple. The king did not disguise to him that excessive timidity which the first impressions of his childhood had left in him. He felt therefore that the surest



way to captivate his good will was to render easy to him the duties at which he was alarmed. He employed the talent that he had of simplifying the business of the state in order to lighten for him its burden. But whether it be that he considered the inveterate evils as past all cure, or that his indolence and his levity had not permitted him to examine them, or that he neglected them as diseases arising from an excess of force and of health, or as vices of constitution inherit in the political body, he dispensed the young king with fatiguing his mind about them, assuring him that all would go on well, provided all was prudently and moderately directed. The excuse of Cardinal Fleury, in his pusillanimous anxiety, was, that an edifice which had lasted more than thirteen hundred years was necessarily bending toward its fall; and that, in propping it, great fears were to be entertained lest it should be shaken: the pretext of Maurepas, in his indolent security, was, on the contrary, that a kingdom so vigorously constituted, needed only its natural forces, in order to recover, and that it should be left to subsist with its abuses and its vices.

But the disorder of the finances is not an evil that can long be palliated and dissembled; distress and discredit soon accuse the minister who conceals and neglects it; and till the true remedy be found, it grows worse instead of healing.

The Abbé Terrai had been given as a skilful minister to Lewis the Fifteenth. An employment of twenty years in the courts of law, amidst a crowd of discontented suitors, had inured him to complaint, and accustomed him to blame; he thought himself obliged, by his profession, to be the object of public hatred. Maurepas removed him, and put in his place Turgot, equally commendable for his talents and his virtues.

The new minister felt strongly that a diminution in the expenditure, economy in the employment of the revenues, and in the expenses of collecting them, the abolition of all privileges burthensome to commerce and agriculture, and a more equal distribution of the taxes on all classes, were the true remedies that should be applied to the state's deep wound, and a king who breathed only justice and love for his people was easily persuaded of it. But soon Maurepas, seeing how much the esteem and confidence which Turgot inspired in the young king exceeded the bounds he wished to prescribe to them, was jealous of his own work, and eagerly hastened to destroy it.

In a country where so many people live by abuses and disorder, a man who introduces rule and economy into the finances, a man whom favour cannot bend, nor indulgence corrupt, must necessarily have for his enemies all those he dissatisfied and all those he threatened. Turgot had too much boldness and candour in his character to stoop to the intrigues of a court: he was accused of severe obstinacy and want of address; and ridicule, which, with us, degrades every thing, having once attacked him, Maurepas felt that he could easily overthrow him. He began by listening to, and by encouraging with a smile, the malice of the courtiers. And soon he himself avowed that in Turgot's views there was more of the spirit of system than of the solid spirit of administra-

tion ; that public opinion had erred on the skilfulness of this pretended sage ; that his head was filled with idle speculations and philosophical dreams ; no habit of business, no knowledge of men, no capacity for the management of the finances, no resources to provide for the pressing exigencies of the state ; a system of perfection that was not of this world, and that existed only in books ; a minute research after that ideal excellence at which we can never arrive ; and, instead of the means of providing for the present, vague and fantastic projects for a distant future ; a fund of ideas, but confused ; great knowledge, but foreign to the object of his ministry ; the pride of Lucifer, and in his presumption the most inflexible obstinacy.

These confidential observations of the old statesman, divulged from mouth to mouth, in order that they might reach the ear of the king, had the more success as they were not absolutely destitute of the appearance of truth. Turgot was surrounded by studious men, who, having devoted themselves to the science of economy, formed a kind of sect, estimable, without doubt, as to the object of their labours, but whose emphatic language, sententious tone, and frequent chimeras, enveloped in an obscure and ridiculously figurative style, furnished food for pleasantries. Turgot favoured them, and shewed them an esteem, about which they themselves made too much noise by exaggerating it. It was therefore not difficult for his enemies to make him pass for the chief of the sect, and the ridicule attached to the name of *economists* rebounded on him.

Beside, it was very true that, proud of the rectitude of his intentions, Turgot neither studied dexterity in the management of public business, nor suppleness nor engaging manners in his relations with the court. His reception was mild and polite, but cold. All were sure of finding him just, but inflexible in his principles ; and credit and favour could not brook the unshaken tranquillity of his refusals.

Although, in two years, by means of reduction and economy, he had considerably diminished the mass of debt with which the treasury was charged, it was still thought that he treated as a chronic disease the exhaustion and ruin of the finances and of credit. The prudence of his regimen, his means of amelioration, the encouragement and the relief which he gave to agriculture, the liberty he restored to commerce and to industry, promised only slow successes, and only tardy resources, while there were urgent demands for which it was requisite to provide.

His system of liberty for all kinds of commerce admitted in its extent neither of restriction nor limit ; and, with respect to the object of the first necessity, when even this absolute liberty should only have been attended with momentary dangers, the risk of suffering the chief resource of life to dry up for a whole people, was not a risk to run without inquietude. The perseverance of Turgot to subject the commerce of grain to no kind of restriction, too much resembled obstinacy. It was by this that his credit in the opinion of the king received a mortal wound.

In a riot, that was excited by the dearness of bread, in 1775, the

king who still felt for him that esteem of which Maurepas was jealous, gave him his entire confidence, and left him full power to act. Turgot had not the policy to request that Maurepas might be called to this secret council, in which the king resigned himself to him, and beside, he had the imprudence to engage openly to prove that the riot was commanded. Le Noir, the minister of police, was dismissed on suspicion of having connived with the authors of the plot. It is certain that the pillage of the bakers' shops had been tranquil and undisturbed. The rioters had likewise a premeditated march, that seemed to indicate a plan; and as to the personage to whom Turgot attributed it, I would not dare to say that it was without reason.

The Prince de Conti, a needy prodigal, full of the old spirit of *La Fronde*, caballing in the parliament in order to be feared at court, and accustomed in his demands to timid compliance, necessarily regarded a respect so firm as that of Turgot, offensive to him. It was possible therefore, that, by a tumult among the people both in town and country, he might have wished to publish the scarcity, encourage alarm, and ruin in the king's opinion the unwelcome minister from whom he expected nothing. But whatever truth there might be in this cause of the riot, Turgot was not able to give the proof of it that he had promised; this false step decided his fall.

Maurepas persuaded the king that this invention of a chimerical plot was only the bad excuse of a vain man, who would neither confess nor relinquish his error; and that in a place that required all the precautions of a calculating mind, and all the suppleness of discretion, a man of system, stubborn and obstinate in his opinions, was not what he wanted.

Turgot was dismissed (May 1776), and the administration of the finances was confided to Clugny, who seemed to have come there only to spoil and plunder with his companions and his mistresses, and who died in the ministry after four or five years of an impudent pillage, of which the king only was ignorant.

Taboureaux took his place, and, like an honest man, he soon confessed himself incapable of filling it. They had given him for an assistant, under the title of director of the royal treasury, a man whose superiority he himself recognized. His modesty honoured his retreat. And Necker succeeded him as director-general of the finances.

- This Genevan, who has since been the sport of opinion, and so differently celebrated, was then one of the most renowned bankers in Europe. In his profession he enjoyed the public confidence, and a most extensive credit. His talents had been tried; and, on subjects analogous to the administration of the finances, his writings had announced a sage and reflecting mind; but he had, with Maurepas, another merit, his hatred for Turgot. The cause of his hatred was as follows:

Turgot, on all that concerned commerce, industry, and agriculture, could not endure the prohibitory system of Colbert; he considered, as a right inherent in property, the unreserved liberty of disposing, each at his pleasure, of his possessions and his talents; he wished that personal interest should be left to consult and to

guide itself, persuaded that it would guide itself well, and that general good would result from the reciprocal action of private interests. Necker, more timid, thought that interest, in almost all men, had need of some moderator and guide; that, till it should have learned the lessons of experience, it would be wise to supply them by prudent regulations; that it was not to private cupidity that the care of the public good should be confided; that, if for the tranquillity and security of a whole nation, civil and moral liberty ought to be restrained and submitted to laws, it was just likewise that the liberty of commerce should be restricted, and even suspended, whenever the public safety was at stake; that property, in objects of the first necessity, was not so absolutely individual, as to give to a part of the nation the right of letting the other perish; and that it would be as unjust to suffer them to rise to an excessive value, as to keep them at too low a price; finally, that to permit the rich and sordid miser to dictate to the poor with too much sovereignty the hard law of necessity, would be to place the multitude at the mercy of the few, and that it belonged to the prudence and duty of administration to preserve the balance between them.

"Avarice," said Turgot, "need not be feared where liberty shall reign; and the way to insure abundance is to leave to the objects of commerce a full circulation. Corn will be sometimes dear; but labour will be dear, and all will be on a level."

"When the price of corn rises progressively," said Necker, "it certainly will regulate the price of industry, and of all work; and no one will suffer from it; but when corn rises suddenly to an excessive value, the people must long suffer before all can be on a due level."

In this system of legal inspection and restricted liberty, Necker had spoken in praise of Colbert, and this praise was approved. It was a double crime, that Turgot did not pardon. This zealous advocate for the liberty of commerce and of industry believed himself infallible in his opinion; and uniformly attributing to it the character of evidence, he considered that person as insincere who did not assent to it.

Till then, however, Necker had not developed his principles; but when Turgot proclaimed his law in favour of the free exportation of grain, not only from province to province but to foreign countries, and at all times, Necker took the liberty of telling him that he saw some danger in it, and that he had some observations to communicate to him on that branch of commerce that might perhaps merit his attention. These words roused Turgot's antipathy to the system of prohibitory laws. He answered, that on that subject his opinion was invariable; but that every man was free to give his sentiments on it, and to publish them.

Necker answered, that he had not had that intention, but that since he gave him the liberty to do so, he should perhaps make use of it. Some time afterward appeared his book on laws relative to the commerce of corn; and, while this book was still in its novelty, happened the riot of which I have just spoken. Turgot concluded that one had contributed to the other, although he well knew that the mob who pillage bakers' shops do not seek counsel in books.

Turgot's friends, more irritated than he, would have persuaded

him to revenge himself on Necker, by sending him back to Geneva: he could have done it, for he had still the entire confidence of the king. His rectitude and his equity saved him from that shame; but he retained to the grave his hatred against a man whose only offences had been accepting his challenge, and combating his opinion.

From the moment that Necker assumed the direction of the finances, his first care and his first labour were to introduce light and order into the chaos he found there. Clugny had left an annual deficit of one million sterling, and at that time this deficit appeared enormous: it was necessary to provide for it. Necker discovered means for this provision. These means were, on one side, to simplify the collection of the public revenues, and to clear the channel, through which they passed: on the other, to see what were the pretences for expenditure, and to reform their abuses.

The king, in order to be as economical as his minister, had only to defend himself against a too easy beneficence. It was therefore to preserve him from daily seductions, that Necker persuaded him to suspend and defer, till the end of every year, the decision of the favours he should spread, in order that he might see the whole sum before he distributed it.

Thus Necker was securing, by simple economy, an overplus that would have enabled him to relieve the public treasury, when the signal of war advertised him that he would need more abundant resources, both to form immediately a respectable navy, and to arm and provide for it. These urgent expenses were annually to amount to six millions and a quarter sterling. Credit alone could face them, and credit was lost: the infidelities of the government had ruined it during the peace; it was requisite either to re-establish it or to fall; for no tax, however burdensome, could suffice for the demands of an expensive war; and England, our enemy, could then borrow ten or twelve millions at a moderate interest. Necker has since been reproached for his loans; but this reproach should have been addressed to the war, which rendered them indispensable, and which itself was not so.

The art which Necker employed to raise and support credit was to enlighten confidence, by shewing, in the balance which economy secured to him, a solid basis and a certain pledge for the loans he was about to open. The same plan that he had pursued, for the savings of peace, served to procure him the funds which the war required. It was well known that he had, perpetually under his eyes, complete and precise statements of the situation of the finances, and, as it were, the balance in hand in all his operations, in order that his engagements might never exceed his means and his resources. It was with this spirit of order that, having found public credit destroyed after a peace of fifteen years, he had been able to re-establish it in the midst of a war that demanded the greatest efforts, and that, in spite of the deficit of 1776, in spite of the expenses of this war, and above seventeen millions borrowed to support it, he was in a situation to announce to the king, in 1781, in the account he presented to him, that the ordinary revenues then exceeded, by four hundred and twenty-five thousand

pounds, the ordinary and annual expenses of the state. This was telling England that, without any new tax, and even without any new economy, France could procure funds for two campaigns; for four hundred thousand pounds of revenue, unemployed, sufficed to conclude a loan of eight millions, a result very capable of hastening a good peace. Necker was nevertheless taxed with vanity for having published this account.

In a skilful minister, this open manner of exposing his operations, and the state of public affairs, has doubtless its advantages, and its success is infallible among a reflecting and studious people. But for a light people, who judge of men and things on bare assertion and without examination, this method has its dangers; and Necker must have well foreseen them. There is no safety in taking such a public for your judge, except when the objects you present to its view are of palpable evidence; and, for the multitude, financial statements will never have that clearness. No man, in society, will perplex himself with calculations. It is therefore very easy to agitate opinion on the accuracy of an account; and from the instant doubt rises, it is a cloud that malignity never fails to swell and blacken. Necker, in doing an exemplary thing for future ministers, satisfactory for the king, imposing for England, encouraging for the nation, heartening for credit, did therefore a very bold and very perilous thing for himself.

I saw him, at that time, fortified with vouchers; every article in his account was supported by them; public esteem seemed to decide that it was not requisite to produce them, and the first impulse of opinion was for him, and all to his glory.

But as soon as there appeared a man confident enough to attack him, this accuser was welcomed by envy and malevolence with full favour. In a memorial, he accused Necker of infidelity in his account, and this memorial was handed about, and the more sought after, because it was in manuscript. An economical minister never wants enemies: Necker had a crowd of them, and he had powerful ones. Maurepas, without declaring himself, rallied them around him; and this is one of the examples of the wretched interests of self-love, on which the destiny of states so often depends.

Maurepas was president of the council of finance; and in the account where Necker exposed the situation of the finances, in a manner so honourable to himself, Maurepas was not named. This, in the eyes of the old minister, was an injurious omission: he dissembled, but he never pardoned it.

Another affront was the dismissal of a minister, the creature of Maurepas, or rather of his wife, and who was discarded at Necker's request. Maurepas, who had never had any excuse for suffering himself to be governed by women, was however wholly subjugated by his wife. That assiduous complaisance, which is a perpetual adulation, and which above all, for age and in adversity, has so much sweetness and empire, had charmed and captivated him as love would have done. He had encouraged the habit of loving, or of hating, all who were loved or hated by the compa-

sign of his misfortune; and Sartines was one of the men to whom the Countess de Maurepas was most attached.

Sartines, formerly minister of police, possessed in circumspection, in discretion, in suppleness, all the trifling talents of mediocrity; but from the obscure detail of the police of Paris to the ministry of the marine, amid the dangers of a maritime war, the distance was alarming: never had Sartines acquired the least portion of that knowledge which this important place required; and if there was a man to oppose to the English admiralty, in the heat of this war, that embraced the two worlds, most certainly it was not he. The bad success of the operations corresponded to the profound incapacity of him who directed them; no plan, no accord, no whole: enormous expenses, disastrous reverses; each fleet that left our ports a prey for the enemy. Our commerce and our colonies unprotected, our convoys taken, our squadrons destroyed: and without counting the irreparable loss of our sailors, and the ruin of our dock-yards, more than four millions of extraordinary expenses thrown every year into the sea, to behold ourselves shamefully driven from it, in spite of all the courage and all the devotion of our navy; such were the titles of Sartines to the support and protection of Maurepas.

Necker, who grieved to see the deplorable use that was made of so much treasure, and into what hands the fortune and glory of a great nation were abandoned, was not the less active and strenuous in his efforts to provide for the exigencies of the war, and to sustain its weight. He had agreed with Sartines that, over and above the sums he annually received from the royal treasury, he might, in pressing cases, make use of the personal credit of the treasurer of the navy, to the amount of two hundred, or two hundred and fifty thousand pounds; and he depended on his exactness in keeping himself within these bounds, when he learned from the treasurer himself that, in obedience to his minister, he had carried the sum of his advances, and of his bills negotiated on the exchange, to one million, payable in three months. This was a most violent blow to the director of the finances; for, having taken no measures to face engagements which had been concealed from him, he saw the term approaching, without knowing how to fulfil them. He did fulfil them; but whether there were on the part of Sartines any malevolence, or only imprudence, Necker no longer felt himself safe in transacting business with such a man; he complained of him to the king, and decidedly demanded either his own retreat, or that of Sartines.

Maurepas was at Paris, confined with the gout. The king, before he determined, wrote to him to consult him. "*When he received the king's letter,*" said the Duke de Nivernois to me, when we were talking on this subject, "*his wife and I were by his bedside. He read it to us. The alternative was long debated: but at last, deciding for himself, 'Sartines must be sacrificed,' said he; 'we cannot do without Necker.'*"

The king, on dismissing Sartines, consulted Necker on the choice of the successor he should give him; and Necker recommended to him Marshal Castries. It is well known how gloriously

the events and conduct of the war justified this choice. The old minister was but the more jealous of him; and his closet from that time was like a center of activity for the cabals that were plotting against Necker. This cabal reckoned too on the protection of the king's brothers.

However circumspect Necker was in his conduct to them, his enemies fancied they perceived that the princes thought him too severe; but, what is much more true, this severity displeased their court, and the exchanges, the cessions, the sales, all the business that men in favour had been accustomed to negociate with the king, having to fear, in this director of the finances, a clear-sighted and rigid examiner, they all longed to be rid of him.

No snares could now be laid for the facile kindness of the king, no favours gained by surprise, no indulgence lightly and silently stolen; above all, no means now existed of concealing, in the corner of the port-folio of the ministers, the secret articles of a lease, of a bargain, or of a privilege, nor, in all the obscure recesses of the labyrinth of the finances, the clandestine benefices that so many were eager to enjoy. The man who struck at the root of so many abuses could not fail to be hated. The memorial that accused him of having imposed on the king was therefore strongly supported.

Far be it from me to fix on the royal brothers of the king the slightest suspicion of having wished to favour calumny. But falsehood had contrived to assume to their eyes the countenance of truth, as the vilest interests had assumed the colouring of zeal.

Bourboulon, the author of the memorial, treasurer of the Count d'Artois, had won the favour of that prince. Proud of his protection, he feared nothing; and, avowing himself Necker's accuser, he defied him to answer the accusation. So much assurance had an air of truth, and thereby imposed on the public. Many could scarcely believe that Necker should have so suddenly and so marvellously changed the situation of the finances; and, without imputing to him as a crime the specious account he had given of them, they conceived that this account had been composed with art, in order to uphold credit, announce means of supporting the war, and facilitate the return of peace. Maurepas welcomed this opinion with an air of intelligence, and seemed to applaud the penetration of those who divined so well.

But Necker did not think it his duty to accept of such an apology; and, incapable of making any composition with opinion on the article of his honour, he requested the king's permission to lay before him, in the presence of his ministers, Bourboulon's memorial, and to answer it article by article. The king consented; and Maurepas, Miromesnil, and Vergennes, three of Necker's enemies, were present at this refutation. The memorial was read there and contradicted, from one end to the other, by papers that confirmed the situation of finances, and of which the account presented to the king was only a development.

At these incontestible proofs, the three ministers had not the least shadow of doubt to oppose; but when the king asked Mau-



repas, in confidence, what he thought of these calculations, and of this statement of the finances, "*I think, Sire, that it is as full of truth as of modesty,*" answered the old courtier.

After this examination, it was necessary that the falsehood of the accusation should be punished, or that Necker should be suspected of having defended himself weakly. He had treated with contempt the abusive libels that attacked only his own person, but ought he to be equally indifferent to that which decried his administration? The more notorious was the pure justice of the king, the more impossible would it seem that Bourboulon should be suffered in the service of the princes, if he was convicted of falsehood and calumny. Yet, after this conviction, he remained in his place, and was received every where, even at the king's suppers.

In this conjuncture, on which I insist, on account of the fatal consequences that Necker's resolution was about to produce, he had three courses to take; one, to rely more firmly on his own reputation, to dissemble and endure all till the death of Maurepas, which was not far distant; another, simply to defend himself by printing, on two columns, Bourboulon's memorial and the authentic vouchers that refuted the slander it contained; the other, to demand of the king, that his accuser, convicted of calumny, should be punished for it. The first is what the most prudent would have advised. "*Why did he not wait,*" said the Duke de Nivernois to me, after the death of Maurepas, "*six months of patience, and we should have kept him still.*" And had peace been restored, and the finances re-established by a good economist, under the best of kings, we should long have enjoyed his reign and his virtues. The second would likewise have been a reasonable course; for the public, having the vouchers before their eyes, truth would have been manifest, and the defamer confounded. But some of Necker's pretended friends thought that it would not be worthy of him to enter the lists with such an assailant. In my opinion, he should either have treated him with contempt, or engaged in fair combat. He demanded that he should be punished. It is true, that he was every day threatened with libels still more atrocious and more infamous; and if no example was made of Bourboulon, it would be impossible that Necker, abandoned by the hatred of the old minister to the insolence and rage of an authorised cabal, should not lose at least a part of that consideration which was the soul of his credit. It was in the name of this credit, of this powerful opinion, without which he could effect nothing, that he required this calumniator, as his whole punishment for this malicious aspersion, should be removed from the service of the Count d'Artois. Maurepas's answer was, that he asked what was impossible. "*It belongs then to the king himself,*" insisted Necker, "*to give testimony to truth, by some mark of the confidence with which he honours me.*" And what he asked was to be admitted to the privy council. I should observe that he considered it as a great evil that, in the council where those questions were agitated which most depend on the state of the finances, the director of those finances should not be admitted by full right; and he had reason to think his presence there at least useful. But Maurepas saw, or feigned to see, in so

just a demand, only a misplaced vanity. "Who? you in the council!" said he, "you who do not go to mass!"—"Count," answered Necker, "that reason suits neither you nor me. Sully did not go to mass, and Sully was of the council." Maurepas, in this answer, only caught at the ridicule of comparing himself to Sully; and instead of admission to the council, he offered to ask his admission to the cabinet. Necker did not dissemble that he considered this offer as derision, and he begged to retire from the ministry.

It was this that his enemies stood impatiently expecting in Maurepas's drawing-room; and the Marchioness de Flammarens, his niece, has confessed it to me. But he, feigning not to consent to what he most desired, refused to present Necker's resignation to the king, and concluded by telling him that he must address himself to the queen, if he were finally resolved to ask his dismissal.

The queen, who listened to him favourably, and expressed her esteem for him, felt the loss which the king was about to suffer; and seeing that Necker persisted in his resolution, she required that he should at least take twenty-four hours to reflect maturely on it.

Necker, in consulting with himself, retraced the good he had done, thought of the services he could still have rendered, and anticipated the bitterness of the regret he would feel after having renounced them; and, unable to persuade himself that an old man, on the brink of the grave, would be obstinately unjust to him, he determined to see him once more.

"Sir," said he, "if the king be pleased to shew me that he is satisfied with my services, he may give me a mark of that satisfaction, which will only enable me to serve him better; it is the direction of the army and navy contracts."—"What you ask," said Maurepas, "would offend the two ministers."—"I do not think so," replied Necker; "but if that be the case, so much the worse; for the minister who, in the examination of expenses, which it is impossible that he should appreciate himself, would not envy me an employment that he abandons to his clerks." The final answer of the one was, that this demand was not fit to be proposed; the ultimate resolution of the other was, to go and intreat the queen to obtain the king's consent to his resignation. The queen took it, and the king accepted it. Here is the source from which all our misfortunes have sprung. You will soon see how they have swelled and overflowed in torrents, till we were plunged in the deep abyss of ruin.

The facility with which the king deprived himself of a skilful minister, who had served him well, may appear somewhat improbable. But these services were discoloured by adroit and perfidious insinuations. Necker was represented to him as a man full of pride, and of a pride that was inexorable. He was told that they had endeavoured to explain to him that, supposing there were some errors of calculation in Bourboulon's memorial, these errors were not crimes; that there was no propriety in demanding that a prince, the brother of the king, should dishonour a man to whom he was attached, by dismissing him from his service for having displeased a minister of finance; but nothing had been able to appease him. They had of-

ferred to ask, and to obtain for him from his majesty, a favour with which the highest of the nobility thought themselves honoured, admission to the cabinet; but he had disdained it. As he conceived himself necessary, he pretended to make law; he compared himself to Sully, and required nothing less than to govern in the council, to keep watch over the ministers, and, in a word, *to seat himself on the throne, by the side of the king.*

The disinterestedness with which Necker had wished to serve the state contributed too to give him the reputation of a lofty republican, who wanted to confer obligation, and to owe none; and in refusing, as he had done, the salary annexed to his place, Necker, in my opinion, ought to have expected that a pride so humiliating for all those who did not and could not possess it would be wrongly interpreted.

Finally, to leave the king no regret at Necker's retreat, they had contrived to persuade him that, if it was an evil, the evil was inevitable.

One of Necker's projects was, as is well known, to establish provincial assemblies throughout the kingdom. And, in order to convince the king of the utility of these assemblies, Necker, in a memorial that he privately read to him, and which was intended for him only, had exposed, on one side the inconveniences of the arbitrary authority confided to the intendants, and the abuses which their subalterns made of it; and on the other side the advantage which the king would derive from approaching his people, and gaining their personal and immediate confidence, instead of depending on the intervention of the parliaments. This memorial, fraudulently obtained, and divulged at the same time that Bourboulon spread his, displeased the magistrates, and prejudiced them against Necker, as much as was requisite to furnish the old minister with some ground for declaring to the king, that Necker was ruined in the opinion of the parliaments; that he, who had once offended them, would always find them unmanageable; that this misunderstanding would be a hydra to combat perpetually; that Necker felt it himself, and that, in retiring for other pretended causes, he was sensible that the place was no longer tenable for him.

A remarkable singularity, and which alone would shew the thoughtlessness of Maurepas, is, that when he returned into his drawing-room, delighted at Necker's retreat, his friends, having asked him what man he meant to put in his place, he confessed that he had not thought of it. *It was Cardinal de Rohan,* said his niece to me one day, *who, happening to be there, recommended Fleury to him;* and Fleury was appointed.

This old counsellor of state, with a cunning, insinuating, and supple mind, had in his favour his connections and his influence in the magistracy; which, in the opinion of Maurepas, was a considerable advantage; for seeing only, in the finances, a war of chicanery between the court and the parliament, for him the most skilful controler-general would be he who could best contrive means and facilities for getting the edicts passed. He had himself made a great point of acquiring the good-will of the parliaments, and he wished that a director of the finances, guided by his example,

should have with them that pliancy which obtains, by gentle means, what authority could scarcely command.

Fleury, in this respect, well answered his expectation. He, without any obstacle, procured the assent of the parliaments to two millions of taxes. Necker had left him upward of eight millions in the royal treasury. This was more than would have been necessary to insure ease to a skilful and well-famed minister; but, with these succours, Fleury soon fell into distress; he wanted that credit which public esteem grants only to good faith.

Six months after the death of Maurepas, Fleury was dismissed; and the king, to have at least an honest man at the head of the finances, appointed D'Ormesson to succeed him.

Unfortunately this man had only probity. Indifferent in all beside, a stranger to finances, destitute of means, assailed by necessity, pressed by men in favour, and reduced to the alternative either of retiring or of supporting himself by unworthy condescensions, he did not hesitate in the choice; and, with his integrity, he preferred resigning to dishonouring himself in it.

A post so slippery, where all seemed to fall, might well have alarmed the ambition of those who aspired to it; yet this ambition was but the more eager; and, in all the avenues of favour, there was not an intriguer who, with some slight tint of the knowledge of business, did not think he might pretend to replace him who had just fallen.

In this crowd, a man of understanding and talents distinguished himself: it was Calonne. He had chosen a method to succeed, which was the more singular, because it was simple. Far from dissembling his ambition, he had announced it; and, instead of the austerity with which some of his predecessors had armed themselves, he had adorned himself with engaging graces, with amenity, and, above all, with complaisance for women; he was known to them as the most obliging of men, and, in confiding his views to those who were in favour, there were no hopes of which he was not lavish to conciliate their suffrages. Thus they incessantly extolled his talents, his skill, and his genius. He was scarcely less seducing for men; by an easy and natural politeness, that marked all distinctions without rendering any offensive, and by an air of benevolence that seemed to be favourable to the ambition of all. At each new change the voice of every courtier was raised for him. He was at last appointed, and on arriving at Fontainebleau, where the court was, it seemed that he held in his hand the horn of plenty: he was accompanied in triumph (3d November 1783).

At first, believing himself at the source of inexhaustible riches, without calculating either the wants or the expenses that awaited them; intoxicated with his own prosperity, in which he imagined he soon saw that of the state; disdaining all foresight, neglecting all economy, as unworthy of a powerful king; persuaded that the first art of a man in place was the art of pleasing; resigning to favour the care of his fortune, and thinking only of rendering himself agreeable to those who study to be feared in

order to be bought, he suddenly saw himself encompassed by praise and vain-glory. Nothing was talked of but the graces of his reception, and the charms of his language. It was to paint his character that the expression of *formes élégantes* was borrowed from the arts; and that new word, *l'obligeance*, appeared to be invented for him. It was said that the ministry of the finances had never been filled with so much gracefulness, ease, and dignity. The facility with which he transacted business astonished every one, and the gaiety with which he treated it, however important it might be, made him admired as a man of prodigious talent. Even those, in short, who dared to doubt whether he were the best of ministers, were forced to acknowledge that he was the most charming. It was said that the business he transacted with the king was only a pastime, so much charm did his address spread over it: nothing rugged, nothing painful, no embarrassment for the present, no inquietude for the future. The king was tranquil, and every body was contented; when, at the expiration of three years and some months of this brilliant and smiling ministry, was revealed the fatal secret of the state's ruin.

It was then that Calonne displayed courage and resources. After having in vain exhausted every means of reviving expiring credit, he saw that his only hope was in some brilliant stroke, that should give to the edicts the aspect of the restoration of public confidence; and to show them invested with an imposing authority, he demanded of the king an assembly of *notables*, to whom he would expose the situation of the finances, in order to advise with them on the means of providing for the deficit which, he said, he had found there, and which the war in the two Indies had necessarily augmented.

This assembly was opened at Versailles, on the 22d of February 1787. The statement, and the project that Calonne presented there, was vast and bold, and, perhaps, merited more favour than it obtained; for it touched on the great means of increasing the produce of the taxes, and at the same time of rendering them lighter by dividing them. But the *notables* were of the number of those who would be affected by the new taxes; and this it is, to which, very unhappily for themselves and for the state, they had never been able to consent. Of Calonne's projects, some were thought confused and deceitful, others full of difficulties that rendered them impracticable; others, in short, bad, even if they could have been executed. Such was the result of the observations of the *notables* on that part of his plan which had undergone their examination, for it was not even discussed to the end.

Its basis was a land-tax in kind, the advantage of which would have been to follow the progressive rise in the value of property. However, if it were found too difficult to collect, he would have changed the mode, provided it had been equally charged on all real estate. But they would not make any arrangement with him; and, for the principle, as well as for the form, the *notables* pronounced that this tax was inadmissible; and at the same

time they declared, that they would refuse to deliberate on every species of tax, unless they were permitted to inspect the detailed statements of the receipt and expenditure, in which they might see how the deficit had been formed; that if, after examining the accounts, they should find that new supplies were indispensable, they would consent that the tax should be equal on all property.

The king's answer was such as they had foreseen. It was forbidden them to insist on this examination; but the explanation, that Calonne refused, he himself had provoked, by disputing with Necker on the origin of the deficit. The way in which he had engaged in that dangerous defile was this:

In 1787, at the opening of the assembly, the deficit, by Calonne's confession, amounted to four millions eight hundred thousand pounds; and, as he wished to believe that a considerable part of this deficit existed before him, he did believe it, and advanced it in the assembly of the *notables*.

Necker, informed that, in that assembly, Calonne had accused as false all the accounts presented before his ministry, wrote to him to say that, having given the most scrupulous attention to the account which he had presented in 1781, he held it to be perfectly accurate; "and, as I have collected," added he, "the vouchers of every article that was susceptible of them, I fortunately find myself able to lend to truth all its force. I think therefore, Sir, that I have a right to ask of you, either to impair, in no way, the confidence that is due to the exactness of that account, or to clear your doubts by communicating them to me."

Calonne, by a very light promise, not to attack that account, eluded the explanation. Necker insisted, and, in answer to the most pressing letter, he received a politely ironical note, with a copy of the speech that Calonne had just delivered in the assembly of the *notables*, and in which he had advanced that, in 1781, there was a considerable deficit between the revenues and the ordinary expenses. Necker was informed, at the same time, that in the great committee of the *notables*, which was held at the king's brother's, Calonne had expressly said, that this sum was two millions three hundred thousand pounds.

Necker then complained to the king that, without choosing to hear him, the controller-general of the finances had taken the liberty of accusing him. "Sire," said he in his letter, "I should be the man of all others most worthy of contempt, if such an accusation had the slightest foundation; I ought to repel it at the peril of my repose and of my happiness, and I come humbly to intreat your majesty to be pleased to permit me to appear before my public accuser, either at the assembly of the *notables*, or at the great committee of that assembly, and in the presence of your majesty." To this letter he received no answer: but he did not think himself obliged to interpret the king's silence as the minister wished him to interpret it. "The king," said he, in the statement that he published, "has not judged it expedient to grant my request, but, penetrated with the extent of

his benevolence and of his justice, I submit myself with confidence to the obligation that is imposed on me by honour and by truth."

In this statement, he agreed that, in 1776, Clugny had left in the finances a deficit of one million; he agreed also that from the death of Clugny, in October 1776, to the month of May 1781, the epoch at which he himself retired from the finances, the increase of the charges had amounted to one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds; but at the same time he shewed how he had provided for this increase, as well by economy as by improvements in the revenues of the state. The *notables* pretended that Calonne was bound to discuss and refute these calculations: and it must be confessed that he had himself too inconsiderately engaged to do so.

Necker had rendered his calculations as clear as it was possible; his acknowledged veracity added still greater weight to them. The book that he had just published on finances had fortified his personal reputation; his morals, his talents, his knowledge, had acquired him, in the public opinion, a firm and consistent esteem, that it was dangerous to attempt to shake, without strong and powerful means.

Necker was exiled for having dared to defend himself. This was another error that Calonne committed; he ought either to have heard him before he attacked him, or to have permitted him to repel the attack. He imputed to him his ill success in the assembly of the *notables*; but he ought to have known that in that assembly a much more real enemy was contriving his fall.

The king felt great reluctance to part with Calonne: he liked his manner of transacting business; he was persuaded of the excellence of his projects; but, foreseeing that they would be rejected by the parliament, as they were by the *notables*, he did violence to his own feelings, and dismissed him. He knew that Miroménil, the keeper of the seal, was Calonne's enemy, and that he had opposed Calonne's operations with his whole power; he dismissed him at the same time, as a kind of sacrifice to so favourite a minister (Calonne the 8th of April, Miroménil the 9th). Fourqueux was called to the direction of the finances; the seal was given to the president De Lamoignon.

It was not possible that Fourqueux should long keep his place; but he had been recommended to the king by those he consulted, till they should have completely destroyed his prejudices against a man whom they wished to give him as a confidential minister, and to whom they looked for the preservation of the state.

The state of the king's mind at that moment is expressed to the life in the details I am going to transcribe.

"When the king charged me with his letter for M. de Fourqueux," says the Count de Montmorin, in some notes which he has confided to me, "I thought it my duty to represent to him that the weighty direction of the finances appeared to me to be too much above the forces of that good magistrate. The king

appeared to feel that my anxiety was well founded.—“ But who should I take then ?” said he.—I answered, “ that it was impossible for me not to be astonished at that question, while there existed a man who united in his favour the suffrages of a whole people ; that, at all times, it was necessary not to oppose public opinion in choosing a financial minister ; but, that, in the critical circumstances in which he then was, it did not suffice not to oppose it, but that it was indispensably necessary to be guided by it.” I added, “ that so long as M. Necker should exist, it would be impossible for him to have any other minister of finance, because the public would always see, with ill humour and chagrin, that place occupied by any other than by him.” The king acknowledged M. Necker’s talents ; but he objected to the defects of his character ; and I easily recognized the impressions that M. de Maurepas had first made against him, and that M. M. de Vergennes, de Calonne, de Miroménil and de Breteuil had more deeply engraved. I was not personally acquainted with Necker ; I had only doubts to oppose to what the king told me of his disposition, of his loftiness, and of his spirit of dominion. It is probable that if I had then known him, I might have decided his recal. I ought perhaps to have insisted more strongly, even without knowing him ; but I had but just entered the ministry ; I had not been there six weeks ; and beside, some timidity, and too little energy ; prevented me from being so pressing as I might have been. What evils should I have averted from France ! What vexations should I have spared the king !” (What would he have said, if he had foreseen that, for having missed that moment of changing the course of our fatal destinies, he should himself be massacred by a people who were become savage, and that, three months after his death, the king should perish on a scaffold) ? “ I was obliged,” continues he, “ to go and deliver to M. de Fourqueux the letter that was addressed to him, and even to conquer his resistance ; I had positive orders to do so. At the same time it is certain that the place had been offered to M. de la Millière : the queen had sent for him ; the king was with her at the hour she had appointed to receive him ; and both strongly pressed him to accept ; but he had good sense enough not to yield to their intreaties. M. de Fourqueux at first made many difficulties ; but at last he determined. He was scarcely in place when the modest opinion that he entertained of himself was but too well confirmed.

“ Public affairs were now in a state of absolute stagnation,” adds M. de Montmorin ; “ credit was hastening daily to its complete fall ; the factitious and expensive means that M. de Calonne had employed to support it, suddenly failing, produced, every day, a considerable fall in the funds ; the royal treasury was empty ; the suspension of all payment was considered as very near at hand : no other resource than a loan was imagined, and it was impossible to try that in a moment of such desperate distress. Ill humour pervaded the assembly of the *notables*, the spirit that prevailed among them was bad, and they already began to murmur, *les états-généraux*. In these circumstances it was necessary



to have a man that could govern opinion. M. de Lamoignon and I communicated our opinions to each other, and we agreed that the only man on whom some hope might be founded was M. Necker. But I mentioned to him the obstacles that I had already found in the king's opinion, and I announced to him that these obstacles would become still more insurmountable by the presence of the Baron de Breteuil. We consulted with the Baron, endeavouring to convert him, but in vain. At last, after a long sitting, we determined to go up to the king; and when we were all three debating on the change which the ministry of the finances required, I spoke with force on the necessity of recalling him whom the public voice demanded. The king answered me (indeed with the air of the deepest affliction) *Well, you have only to recal him.* But the Baron de Breteuil then rose, with extreme warmth, against the halfwrested resolution: he represented the inconsequence that there would be in recalling a man who was scarcely arrived at the place fixed for his exile, in order to put him at the head of the administration: *what weakness such a conduct would betray, what force it would give to him, who, thus placed by opinion, would have no obligation but to it, and to himself.* He spoke strongly and at length on the abuse that Necker would not fail to make of such a position. He painted his character in colours that were best calculated to make an impression on a king, naturally jealous of his authority, and who had a confused presentiment that he had enemies who wanted to tear it from him, but who believed it still entire in his hands, and who wished to preserve it. There were very specious reasons in what the Baron de Breteuil had just said; but, had they been less so, they would still have produced the effect which they had on the king; who had only yielded to my advice with extreme repugnance, solely perhaps because he supposed that we were all three of the same opinion. The Archbishop of Toulouse was then proposed, and accepted without resistance. At the same time the king observed, that he had the reputation of being a restless and ambitious man, and that we should perhaps repent of having recommended him to his choice. But he added, that he had reason to think that the defects of this prelate had been exaggerated to him; that the prejudices he had felt against him had long been weakened; and that he had been pleased with some memorials on the administration of the finances which he had sent him."

I have omitted none of these details, both because they will make known the mind and disposition of the king, whose character was perhaps a little too facile, but simple, natural, and good; and, above all, because they discover how the principal link in the chain of our misfortunes was formed.

## BOOK XIII.

**BRIENNE** had distinguished himself in the States of Languedoc, and he had there shewn that talent which his place required: in the little circle of his administration, he might have been thought clever. Like Calonne, he had that lively, quick and resolute character which imposes on the multitude. He had likewise something of the address of Maurepas; but he had neither the air of good-nature and affability of the one, nor the pliancy and agreeable manners of the other. Naturally acute, subtle and penetrating, he neither could nor wished to conceal the intention of being so. His eye, in observing, watched you; even his gaiety had something disquieting; and in his physiognomy there was an excess of cunning that engendered distrust; on the side of intellect, a sagacity that resembled craft; clear and even extensive ideas, but superficial; some knowledge, but scattered; unstable perceptions rather than mature views; a polished wit, with some brilliancy; and in great objects some facility for seizing the trifling details, but no capacity for embracing the whole; on the side of morals, ecclesiastical egotism in all its force, and the greediness of avarice united in the highest degree to that of ambition. In circles that lightly touch on every thing, and examine nothing, Brienne had the art of employing a certain political babble, concise and rapid, interrupted by those mysterious suppressions that seem to indicate more than we say, to tell what we could still add, and to give a vague indefinite character to the opinion we inspire of ourselves. This manner of displaying by feigning to conceal himself, this self-sufficiency mixed with discretion and reserve, this alternate use of broken words and affected silence, and sometimes a light and disdainful censure of what was doing without him, while he expressed his astonishment that none perceived what was best to be done, such was very truly the art and secret of Brienne. He shewed nothing of himself but patterns, and they were very often not of his stuff. Yet, in almost all the circles from which reputations flow, every one concluded that he came to the ministry with his head full of grand views, and his port-folio replete with the most luminous projects. He came, and his port-folio and his head proved to be equally empty.

In the wreck of Calonne, he seemed to have collected all that could be saved: the edicts of the stamp duty and of the land-tax, which he presented to the parliament, were the edicts of Calonne. He might have made the authority of the *notables* his support; and, between the two great rocks of the states-general and of bankruptcy, he had powerful means of reducing that assembly to recognize the necessity of the taxes. He only dissolved it. Nothing was there decreed nor concluded.

He heard the cry of the nation that demanded Necker's recall, and, had he solicited it himself of the king, such an act

would have honoured him, he would thereby have confirmed himself in the eminent place that he occupied, he would have relieved himself from the burden of the finances, he would have secured his own repose, inspired blessing on his elevation, covered with a veil of dignity his unmerited fortune, concealed at his ease his incapacity, in a word, he would have conducted himself like a skilful and an honest man; he had not the courage to do it. That fatal fear of being effaced, of being surpassed, deprived him of this courage. In vain did his friends intreat him to call to his aid the man whom the public voice invoked; he answered: *The king and queen will not consent to it.* It depends on you, said Montmorin to him, to persuade the queen that Necker is necessary to you, and I will undertake to persuade the king of it. Brienne, thus closely pressed, answered, *I can do without him.* Thus empires perish.

Displeased to hear the public demand Necker so earnestly, he took pleasure in seeing him exposed to the lash of hungry writers, whom, as it was said, he paid for their calumnies. At the same time he perceived himself lost in the chasm of his own ideas. In less than five months, he tried two controllers-general, Villedieu and Lambert; both were without resource. A new council of finance, a consulting committee, all was welcome to him, except Necker, and all was useless. Till the last extremity he flattered himself with expedients; he succeeded in none. Bewildered, at sea without a compass, and not knowing which way to push the helm of the state, in fine, in his conduct, and in his character always at variance with himself, irresolute in his temerity, pusillanimous in his audacity, daring every thing, and abandoning every thing almost the instant after he had dared it, he never ceased to compromise and to weaken the royal authority, while he rendered himself at once odious by his despotism, and contemptible by his folly and instability.

To gain the public favour, he began by desiring to establish provincial assemblies; and in rendering them elective and dependent on the people, he did that lightly and inconsiderately which would have required the most serious reflection. Despotic as he was, he wanted to give himself an appearance of popularity, and to pass for a republican. He supported this part very ill.

After having dismissed the *notables*, he sent to the parliament his two edicts of the stamp duty and the land-tax, as if they were necessarily to pass at the first view, without any difficulty. It was there however that some young ardent heads began to shake those respectable pillars, those questions of public right so critical and so delicate, that were soon afterward debated with so much warmth and temerity. This did not at all disquiet him. He even appeared, during the sittings and the debates of the parliament, to have forgotten his favourite talent, address and insinuation. No negotiation, no conference, no road opened to conciliation: he wanted to surmount every difficulty, and carry every thing by open force. So much arrogance and obstinacy raised a spirit of revolt in the magistracy; and the resolution of rejecting the new edicts, even before they were presented, was taken at the same time in

all the parliaments of the kingdom. But to this insurrection, that menaced the royal authority, Brienne only opposed the disdain of conciliatory measures, and the resignation of the public cause to the fortune of events.

The parliament of Paris demanded that the state of the finances should be communicated to it: this demand was reasonable. In order to regulate the amount and duration of the subsidies according to the exigencies of the state, the parliament ought to know what those exigencies were: the right of remonstrance implied the right of examining; and unless the minister required from it the obedience of a slave, he could not refuse to enlighten it on its duties. This was what Brienne would not listen to. He did not perceive that it was more necessary than ever that there should be in the name of the people a form of deliberation and of acceptance for taxes, and that, if the government disputed the right of the parliament, as it then stood, to record and consent to the edicts, the nation would give itself representatives who would be less manageable. This it was that the minister and the parliament should both have foreseen, and united to prevent.

To remove the difficulty, Brienne advised the king to hold a *lit de justice* at Versailles, where, by express command, the edict of the stamp duty and that of the land tax were registered; this old child was a stranger to the age he lived in. The next day, the parliament having declared the transcription of the two edicts on its registers to be null and illegal, the expedient conceived by Brienne was to exile the parliament, and to disperse its members.

The keeper of the seal, Lamoignon, a man of a firm and frank character, but cautious and discreet, victoriously combated in the council this advice of Brienne: he shewed that magistrates thus dispersed would be inaccessible to all negotiation, and he concluded by telling the king that, if the removal of the sovereign courts might sometimes be useful, the individual exile of the magistrates would always be an imprudence on the part of the ministry.

Brienne, to whom this idea of removal appeared quite new, adopted it instantly, and persuaded the king to sign letters-patent, which transferred the parliament from Paris to Troies. The keeper of the seal demanded some delay; he was not listened to, and Brienne, in the king's presence, said to him: "your ideas are excellent; but you are too slow in your resolutions." Scarcely was the parliament arrived at Troies, when Brienne, in conferring with the keeper of the seal, recollected, as by accident, that the presence of that court would be necessary to him for his loans in the month of November. "If I had thought of that sooner," exclaimed he, "I would not have exiled it; I must recal it instantly;" and his emissaries were immediately put into action. (I am indebted to the keeper of the seal for these details.)

Lamoignon, a member of the parliament before he became keeper of the seal, had made known his views for the reform of our laws. It was notorious that he was occupied with the means of simplifying legal proceedings, and of diminishing their duration and expense; this, in the eyes of his ancient corps was a species of hostility that awakened both its fear and its hatred.

Brienne, informed of this aversion of the parliament for the keeper of the seal, conceived the project of promising his dismissal, if the parliament would be more manageable. "My credentials are gone," said he to Lamoignon, after having written.—"What credentials?" asked Lamoignon.—"The letter," answered Brienne, in which I have promised your dismissal, if they will be guided by reason; but don't be disturbed."

The letter arrives at Troies: it is communicated, and a sudden revolution takes place in the minds of all. All are persuaded that the exile, the imperious attacks, the despotism they endure from the minister are dictated by the man who has long meditated the ruin of the magistracy: *Brienne, abandoned to himself, would have been more feeble and more timid; that character of vigour which they saw him assume and quit at every instant, was not his own; he borrowed it from Lamoignon; it was he whom it was requisite to destroy; the ruin of the common enemy could not be too dearly purchased.* It was on this condition that the edict of the twentieths was passed; for, as to those of the land-tax and the stamp duty, Brienne was obliged to consent to withdraw them. But he reckoned on a considerable loan, and it was for him a triumph to have abused and appeased the parliament. I ought not to omit that, to give himself more weight and dignity in his negotiation, he had wanted to engage the king to name him prime minister, and that the issue of this attempt, at first ill received, finally was that he was declared principal minister.

The parliament repaired to Versailles: all appeared to be reconciled; and Brienne, on the same day, said to the keeper of the seal, "I have done right, as you see; and if I had not promised these people your dismissal, you and I should both have run the risk of not being long here." But, in thinking that he had but mocked the parliament, Brienne was cheating himself.

According to the terms of the edict, which the parliament was to pass, he reckoned that the two-twentieths would be collected accurately on all real property, without any exception, and in the proportion of their effective revenues. The parliament pretended, on the contrary, that this edict ought to make no change in the ancient mode of collecting; that it authorized neither research nor new verification; and all the parliaments leagued together to declare that, if the government exercised a fiscal inquisition on property, they would oppose it openly. They were supported in this opposition by a considerable party; the clergy, the nobility, all who were in favour, made common cause with the high magistracy. Miserable avarice, that has ruined them all! It was this that suddenly united that formidable party of the privileged orders against the ministry; and to intimidate the government, their cry of war was, *les états-généraux*.

As, among the vices of private interest, we sometimes find the virtues of public spirit, it is possible that, in the number of ardent minds, among the clergy and the nobles, there might be some who were induced by the old abuses of a disordered authority to wish sincerely for the convocation of the States-general, as the only and the necessary remedy; but, with respect to the mass and

the whole body of men, this appeal to the nation could only be a feigned menace, or a blindly passionate resolution. They must have well known that, for privileged orders, and favoured classes, the most formidable of all tribunals was that of the people; that, over-burthened with taxes, it would not be the people who would grant them the permission of being exempt from taxation any more than themselves; and these corps having every thing to fear from the discussion of their privileges, it is highly improbable that they should have liked better to submit them to the debates of a popular assembly, than to treat for them with a moderate and conciliating minister. Brienne, instead of convincing the parliament of the danger of this demand, thought only of eluding it, and proposed to the provinces to compound for the twentieths. Some consented: others, encouraged by the resistance of the parliaments, would not listen to any arrangement.

The combat began; the body of reserve of the parliaments, the prohibitory decrees, soon appeared, and threatened to prosecute, as an exactor and extortioner, whoever, in the valuation and collection of the twentieths, should conform himself to the edicts; the flame was kindling from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, when suddenly, affecting another species of assurance, the minister procured a decree of the council, by which the king declared that the flourishing state of his finances permitted him to require no new extension in the imposition of the twentieths. At the same time he prepared an edict for a loan of two millions and a half, at ten per cent. annuity, and it was decided that the king, in person, should go to the parliament to get this edict recorded.

Two days before the royal sitting, the keeper of the seal being come to Paris, received there a visit from a man whose turbulent and daring spirit had distinguished him at the head of the inferior magistracy, whose spokesman he had made himself. It was Duval d'Epréménil, a judge of the Court of Inquiry. He observed to Lamoignon, that a loan of two millions and a half would remedy nothing; that the minister should open one of twenty millions, divided into five years; that he should employ this time and this treasure to re-establish order in the finances, and then convoke the States-general.

Brienne, on receiving the letter in which Lamoignon communicated to him this advice, leaped for joy; and, not doubting but that the message came to him from the Court of Inquiry, he answered, "That he did not hesitate to profit by this counsel. For the next five years," said he, "I shall thus be secure from all dispute with the parliament." Without delay, he ordered an edict to be prepared for loans of twenty millions, which should succeed each other during the space of five years, at the expiration of which he promised the convocation of the States-general. At the same time he announced a saving of two millions, as well in the reduction of the expenditure as in the increase of the revenues, which would answer the loan. But, as if, in the sitting which he counselled the king to hold, he had wished to rouse opposition instead of appeasing it, he directed the king and the keeper of the seal to assume the severest tone; he recalled to the

parliament its ancient maxims on the absolute power and entire independence of the crown; he opposed to it the words consigned in its decrees, *that to the king alone belonged the sovereign power in the kingdom; that he was accountable to God only for the exercise of the supreme power; that the legislative power resided in the person of the sovereign, without dependence and without partition; and as to the States-general, the minister kept himself on the defensive, in saying, that to the king alone belonged the right of convoking them; that he only ought to judge, whether that convocation was useful or necessary; that the three orders assembled would be for him only a more extended council, and that he should always be the sovereign arbiter of their representations and of their complaints.* Nothing could be more useless in these circumstances than the loftiness of this language. The effervescence of general opinion only became more vivid; the parliament took fire, the sitting was tempestuous. The king, expecting to receive there only counsel and information, had permitted the members to openly declare their sentiments; many speakers abused this liberty even to indecency; and a violent and bitter censure, mixing with opinions, made the king feel too sensibly that, instead of his edicts, it was his conduct and his reign that they pretended to have the right of examining. He contained himself during the space of seven hours which this sitting occupied; and, affected to the bottom of his soul with the licence in which the orators indulged, he did not suffer a single mark of impatience to escape him. Here began the trial of that patience of which he has since had so much need.

At the same time the majority of voices united to demand the convocation of the States-general for the month of May in the following year; and D'Epréménil said to the king, *I see that desired word ready to escape from your lips; pronounce it, Sire, and your parliament subscribes to your edicts.* If the king had yielded, the edicts would indubitably have passed. But Brienne had recommended him to listen to no condition, and to keep to the principle, that, *wherever the king was present, his will was law.*

In fine, in spite of the king's silence, and the refusal which that silence expressed, it has been thought, that if he had permitted the votes to be collected, the majority would have been in favour of the acceptance of the edicts. But, punctually exact in observing what was prescribed to him by his minister, he ordered the inscription of the edicts without collecting the suffrages of the parliament, and likewise directed a declaration to be registered, by which he prorogued all the parliaments in the kingdom. The Duke d'Orléans, who from that time began to play his part, protested, in the king's presence, against this act of authority; and, as soon as the king had retired, the assembly, in which the peers still were, adhered, by a decree, to the protestation of the prince.

The next day the great deputation of the parliament was ordered to Versailles. The king cancelled the decree of the preceding day, forbade any new deliberation on the same subject, exiled the Duke d'Orléans to Villers-Cotterets, and two judges of the high-court, Fréteau and Sabatier, one to Mount Saint-Michael, and the other to Ham-castle.

The league of the parliaments against the ministry then became general ; and Brienne, despairing of reducing them to submission, resolved to annihilate them. To this daring project, which he presented to the council, was joined that of a plenary and permanent court for the registering of laws.

In this council, Lamoignon combated the idea of a plenary court ; but in vain. He was more successful in his opposition to the destruction of the high magistracy ; a measure too violent, said he, and which Maupeou had dishonoured. He substituted in its stead the project of weakening the influence of the parliament of Paris, and its force of resistance, by erecting within its jurisdiction considerable bailiwicks, whose competency would extinguish the greater number of law-suits, and render unnecessary the tumultuous and noisy court of inquiry, of which the government wished to be rid. This simple and sure method, of reducing the parliament by the increase of bailiwicks, could not fail to be welcome to the people ; it would abridge law proceedings, would preserve the suitors from the expenses of long journeys, from the slowness of appeals, and the plunder of chicanery ; and, with respect to a jurisdiction so vast as that of Paris, this project carried with it the proof of its excellence. Brienne wished to include in it all the parliaments of the kingdom ; and, without calculating what a mass of resistance he should have to conquer, he directed the keeper of the seal to draw up a plan of it, and prepare the edict. At the same time he traced to him the form of a plenary court, which he thought sufficiently imposing to secure respect and obedience to the laws. This grand operation was the secret of the *lit de justice* of the 8th of May, 1788. But the silence that was kept on what was to pass there, the order given to the governors of the provinces to repair to their posts, the packets sent to the commandants of the cities where the parliaments resided, perhaps too some infidelity on the part of the printers, having discovered the project of attacking the magistracy, it put itself on its guard ; and three days before the *lit de justice* (on the 5th of May) the parliament assembled, and protested against all that should be done there, under the promise and most solemn oath, to resume its functions only in the same place and in its complete integrity, without suffering that any one of its members should either be excluded or separated from it.

As soon as the resolution the parliament had formed, and the engagement it had made, were known at Versailles, and that D'Épréménil was the mover of it, Brienne obtained from the king an order to arrest this dangerous man : and D'Épréménil, at the moment the officers of justice came to take him at his own house, having fled for refuge into the high court, which was then sitting, was there seized and conducted as a prisoner to the island of Sainte-Marguerite.

The *lit de justice*, which was held at Versailles on the 8th of May, was held on the same day by the governors of the provinces in all the parliaments of the kingdom ; and the laws that were



promulgated there, almost all congenial to the wishes of the nation, met every where with the same resistance.

A better distribution of justice in the provinces, the tribunals less distant, the appeals less frequent, the great causes reserved for the superior courts, the small causes terminated in less time and at less expense, the reform of the criminal code promised and already begun, a month's delay granted to the culprit after his sentence of death, torture abolished, and *la Selette* suppressed, an indemnification granted by the law to the innocent, it should have prosecuted, the obligation imposed on the judges, on inflicting the punishment, to declare the exact nature of the crime; all this appeared desirable; the States-general promised before the expiration of five years, the king's word pledged to render them periodical, all the money edicts consented to and accepted by the nation itself, and for the verification of the other laws an express tribunal, where only causes of trespass should be tried; here again was nothing that seemed calculated to excite alarm for the future. But, on one side, till the States-general should be convoked, the overthrow of the parliaments appeared to destroy the only barrier that till then had been able to oppose itself to the despotism of the ministers; on the other, this plenary court, whose name alone would have been a cause of disfavour, presented the idea of an oligarchic tribunal, which would be more formidable, because it would be invested with all the public force and all the majesty of the laws.

This tribunal, composed of the officers of the crown and the commanders of the armies, the peers and the nobles of the kingdom, some magistrates chosen at the king's pleasure in the sovereign authority, appeared to be necessarily a too powerful counterpoise for the assembly of the states.

Thus, in the *lit de justice*, the nation saw only despotism disguised under specious advantages. The suspension of the course of justice throughout the kingdom excited an universal murmur: and in Paris that trainband of young lawyers (*la bazoche*) who were devoted to the parliament, inundated the courts of the palace. The citizens were tranquil; they knew that the dispute between the parliament and the court arose from a refusal to subscribe to the equal imposition of the twentieths on all property; and this refusal did not oppose them to league with the privileged orders. But there is in Paris a mass of people who, looking with an evil and envious eye on the luxury that surrounds them, suffer impatiently at having only labour and poverty for their lot, and who, in the vague hope of some happy change for themselves, are eager to assemble at the first signal of disorder, and to rally round the first factious leader who promises them a milder fate. It was by this multitude, in the presence of the parliament, that the party of its defenders was fortified around the palace. The magistracy put itself under the protection of the populace; and, under the eyes of the general police, all the excesses of the grossest licence were committed with impunity: a pernicious example, which has been but too much imitated! It is thus that insurrection and revolt were first provoked by the parliament. The

king's benevolence would never suffer him to adopt rigorous measures. He ordered guards to be posted in the avenues of the palace ; but he commanded them only to employ their arms in securing the lives and the repose of the citizens. It was thus that the tumult was appeased and suppressed without violence. At the same time, either from the inactivity of a timid and feeble police, or from the impulse of those who, in exciting disturbance, answered for impunity, the seditious commotions among the people of Paris perpetually increased.

In the provinces, the despotism of the parliaments, each in its jurisdiction, the security which their members enjoyed in the vexations they exercised on their neighbours, their arrogance, their pride, were not calculated to render their cause interesting ; but by their relations, their connivance with the privileged class, they formed together a numerous and powerful party. Even the people had suffered themselves to be persuaded that the cause of the parliaments was their own. In Brittany, they believed that a tax on the *Sallians* was in agitation : they were told beside that they were threatened with new vexations ; and the magistrates themselves stooped to spread these falsehoods.

Brienne, in the midst of these agitations, learnt that the nobles of Brittany were sending twelve deputies to denounce to the king the iniquity of his *lit de justice*. The minister of the king's household, the Baron de Breteuil, immediately received orders to advance the patroles to Senlis, to wait their arrival there, and to send them back. The order was ill executed ; the deputies passed ; but they were scarcely arrived when they were committed to the bastille. Instantly the nobles of Brittany, instead of twelve deputies, sent fifty-four. These were admitted to an audience of the king, and the twelve others released. The Baron de Breteuil, accused by Brienne of seconding him ill, did not dissemble the repugnance he felt to do what he did not approve, and he demanded his dismissal.

At the same time the province of Dauphiny raised the standard of liberty, by giving to itself that constitution which, vaunted as a model, has since had so much influence. In the new form that Dauphiny gave to its states, the third (or that of the people) had half the votes. Brienne, with his natural levity, authorized this disposition, never seeing any thing beyond the moment. At last, reduced by his own weakness, and by the general insurrection of the parliaments, to capitulate with them, he consented to what he had refused with the greatest obstinacy, and by a decree of the council of the 8th of August, he pledged the king's promise for the convocation of the States-general in the month of May following ; a tardy resolution, that did but announce the end of an expiring minister.

The finances were ruined, the royal treasury empty, no new tax, no new loan, no hope of credit, and on all sides the most urgent wants ; the annuities on the city, the pay even of the troops, all was failing at once. Nothing less would have sufficed to force Brienne to acknowledge his own incapacity, or at least his actual inability to extricate the state from this abyss of misery,

He chose to complete his dishonour, and, by an order of council of the 16th of August, he declared that the two fifths of the payments from the royal treasury should be made in government notes. Public malediction poured on him like a deluge. Then at last he resolved to demand Necker's recal. But Necker refused to join him in the ministry. He answered, "That, if he had still some hope of being useful to the state, that hope was founded on the confidence with which the nation honoured him, and that, to preserve some credit himself, it was evident under what condition only he could return."—"This answer is my sentence," said Brienne to the keeper of the seal; "I must resign;" and he gave in his resignation (the 23d of August 1788).

He left in the royal treasury only sixteen thousand guineas either in money or in other effects; and the day before his departure he sent there for eight hundred guineas, his month's salary as minister, and which month was not expired: an exactness that was the more remarkable, because, without reckoning the salary of his place, and a pension of two hundred and fifty pounds annexed to his blue ribbon, he possessed in benefices twenty-eight thousand a year: and beside he had very recently cut down timber on one of his abbeys to the value of forty thousand guineas.

The consideration which Necker had enjoyed had increased during his exile; but the encouragement inspired by the public esteem was counterbalanced by the inquietude which the situation of the kingdom could but create.

Around the capital, sixty square leagues of country, and of most fertile country, absolutely laid waste by the hail on the eve of the harvest; a bad crop in all the rest of the kingdom; the price of corn exaggerated still more by the fear of famine, and an urgent necessity to import some from abroad; neither money nor credit: all government paper decried in the market, and almost without value; every way to loans and taxes interdicted; on one side, the receipt necessarily impoverished; on the other, the expenditure unavoidably increased: and, instead of the contributions to which the inhabitants of the country are subjected, pressing succours to extend to all the places which the hail had just ruined; the courts of justice in inaction; licence every where unpunished, and the police intimidated; discipline even tottering among the troops, and attacked in that principle of obedience and fidelity which is its nerve and spring; all ancient public right discussed and questioned; in short, all classes and orders of the state, without agreeing with each other, or each with itself, on what the states-general ought to be, uniting to demand them with the greatest earnestness, and till then refusing to listen to any supply; such was the frightful crisis in which Necker found the kingdom.

His first care was to re-establish order: the parliaments were restored to their functions; justice resumed its course, and the laws of police their force and their action. The treasury, empty on Necker's arrival, appeared suddenly to fill; it resumed its payments; and if the despairing decree of the 16th of August

was not at first formally revoked, at least it was virtually annulled: all payments were made in specie; and a few weeks afterward a new decree of the council completely effaced the shame of Brienne's bankruptcy.

In suffering that discarded minister to fall silently into contempt, the public hatred had fixed itself on Lamoignon, who was considered as his accomplice; it became necessary to sacrifice him. However, as I owe more to truth than to opinion, I will be bold to say that the king lost in Lamoignon a good minister, and the state a good citizen. Deceived by the reputation that Brienne had usurped, Lamoignon had at first seen no better plan to adopt than to unite with him, under the reciprocal promise of acting together, and in concert. It was not long before he recognized his levity and incapacity. But, in seeing him perpetually engage himself in dangerous defiles, he often admonished, sometimes arrested, and never abandoned him. The error, or the misfortune of Lamoignon, was to have joined such an associate. He was ardently desirous of good; he loved the king tenderly; he has himself told me that he neither knew a better nor a more honest man: and he, full of that old spirit of integrity that marked his ancestors, appeared to have taken loyalty and courage for his characteristic virtues. The hatred of the parliaments was itself his eulogy. The esteem, and, in secret, the confidence of the king had followed him to his retreat at Baville. But either the vexation of exile, or some domestic misfortune induced him to abandon life (the 8th of May 1789) and saved him from sights at which he would have died of grief.

Necker had assumed in the council an ascendancy that may easily be conceived, by considering the circumstances which produced his return to the ministry. A winter, as severe as, and longer than, that of 1709, made the resources of this minister appear still more astonishing. No new tax, no new loan known; and, by means of a little tardiness, which excited no complaint, the annuities, the pensions, all just demands regularly discharged; and from all the countries of the world corn flowing into our ports, to save us from famine; succour granted to the unfortunate in the country: relief to the sick, to the aged, to orphan children in the hospitals; immense expenses, to secure, to accelerate the arrival of provisions; such were the services that Necker rendered to the state; and it is probable that, if, without interval, he had been kept in the ministry, and had been suffered to profit by the benefits of peace, the prosperous situation of the kingdom would have offered so pleasing a picture, that no one would have thought of the states-general; at least no one would have mentioned them.

But the king's word once pledged to assemble them in the month of May, it was difficult for Necker to make him break that engagement without alienating the public mind. Beside, he has himself not dissembled that, at the bottom of his heart, he wished for the convocation of the states: "I thought," said he, in speaking of his conduct at this epoch, "that, by maintaining the tranquillity of the kingdom, by propping the tottering edifice

of the finances, by relieving the scarcity with abundant provision, and by thus smoothing every way to the greatest and most desired of events, I should have executed my task well, should have done my duty as a public man, as a good citizen, and as the faithful servant of a king who wished well to the state." As to the motives that animated him, he has explained them to us likewise. "No man," says he, "knew better than I how unstable and transient was that good which could be done under a government, where the principles of administration were changed at the whim of the ministers, and the ministers at the whim of intrigue. I had observed that, in the transient course of the administration of public men, no general idea had time to establish itself, nor any essential good to acquire solidity and firmness." He recollected that cabinet of Maurepas, to which he himself went up with fear and melancholy, whenever it was requisite to talk of reform and economy to a minister grown old in the vain parade and customs of the court. It was the lively impression he received from the difficulties, the crosses, the obstacles that he himself had encountered, and the combats he had been compelled either to engage in or maintain, that induced him to regard the States-general as a port of safety for the shattered vessel of the state.

But, if this convocation had its advantages, it had likewise its dangers: and, above all, the form that should be given to it might be of weighty importance and extreme consequence.

Necker, at first, did not appear inclined to take on himself the risk of this first operation. He requested the king to call to his aid that assembly of notables, whose zeal he had tried, in order to consult with them.

The examples of past times, for the composition of the States-general, were uncertain and various. But the majority of these examples were favourable to the privileged orders; and if that of 1614 were followed, as the parliament demanded and expected, the order of the nobility, and that of the clergy, would be secure of preponderating. Their rights, their privileges, would be confirmed and guaranteed to them for the future; and, in return for the service which the parliament would have rendered them, it would itself be constituted their perpetual representative in the interval of the assemblies. But, in the popular class, the public mind had assumed a character that no longer harmonized with the pretensions of the parliamentary and feudal classes. The labourer in the villages, the mechanic in the towns, the honest citizen occupied with his trade or his industry, desired only to be relieved; and, left to themselves, they would have deputed none but peaceful men, like themselves. But, in cities, and above all in Paris, there is a class of men who, although distinguished by education, are connected with the people by birth, make common cause with them, and when their own rights are in question, espouse the people's interests, lend them their talents, and imbue them with their own passions. It was in this class that a contentious and daring spirit of innovation had long been forming, and which every day acquired more force and more influence.

The very recent example of North America, restored to itself by its own courage, and by the succour of our arms, was perpetually vaunted to us. The neighbourhood of the English, the more frequent practice of travelling in their country, the study of their language, the reputation of their authors, the assiduous reading of their newspapers, the eager curiosity to know what was said and done in their parliament, the lively praises that were bestowed on their orators, the interest that was taken in their debates, in short, even the affectation of imitating and adopting their tastes, their fashions, their manners, all announced a ripening disposition to resemble them; and, in truth, that spectacle of public liberty and personal security, that noble and worthy use of the right and property in the voluntary acceptance and equitable assessment of the taxes necessary to answer the exigencies of the state, might justly excite in us a spirit of emulation. It was under the influence of such examples, that some well-educated, turbulent, and daring men, every where admonished the people not to forget their own rights, and the minister to guard them.

The minister desired only to maintain the rights of the people; for the league of the parliaments, of the clergy, and of the nobility, against the royal authority, had forced him to look on the people as the king's refuge. But he felt himself too feeble against so great a mass of resistance and of credit, and he wanted some powerful support.

He was not very sure of this support from the assembly of the *notables*. That assembly, in which the church, the military and civil officers would govern, and where the *notables* of the cities would not even have one-third of the votes, could scarcely be favourable to the commons.

But, whatever might be the result of the deliberations, the impulse would be given to the public mind throughout the kingdom, and the great interests of the state, agitated in that assembly, would be submitted to a still more lively discussion without. It was, above all, from this discussion that the minister expected power, and perhaps that parade of consultation was only intended to awaken the national opinion by collision, or as a signal to it to declare itself. The king had invited it to this declaration by a decree of the council before the dismissal of Brienne. It was therefore probable that public opinion would determine the *notables* to join in the same invitation. They had already shewn themselves popular in their first assembly of 1787, by not only consenting, but by demanding, that, in the provincial assemblies, which Calonne proposed, the number of members of the third estate should equal that of the members of the clergy and nobility united. The question then seemed decided by themselves; and Necker only left them the honour of confirming their decision. The same disposition in the states of Dauphiny had been loudly praised, and proclaimed as a model. Thus, on every side, the *notables* were admonished to be popular; and it was not probable that they would wish, or would dare to be otherwise, after the disposition they had manifested. It was in this confidence that the same assembly of 1787 was convoked anew on the 5th of

October 1788, and met at Versailles on the 3d of November in the same year.

But when they were to deliberate on the manner of composing the three estates that national council, that supreme tribunal to which their rights, their privileges, and all the greatest interests of their rank and their fortune would be discussed, each of the orders seemed only occupied with the dangers it was about to run.

The objects on which they had to deliberate were proposed in questions, the principal of which were :—What ought to be the respective number of the deputies of each order? What had been, and what should be, their form of deliberating? What conditions would be requisite in order to be electors, and to be eligible in the order of the clergy, and in that of the commons, whether in villages or in cities? Ought these two qualities to depend on a certain measure of real property, or only on a certain quota of contribution? And what this quota should be?

The assembly was divided into six boards, each presided by a prince; and the king required that, on each of the questions proposed, the boards having formed each its definitive vote, these votes, with their motives sufficiently developed, should all be presented to him, with the account of the suffrages that each opinion should have had.

In the board presided by *Monsieur*, opinions were divided on the number of deputies that each order should have; and by a majority of thirteen against twelve, it was decided that each deputation should be composed of four deputies, one of the church, one of the nobility, and two of the third estate.

The five other boards, some unanimously, the others by a great majority of votes, demanded that the number of representatives should be equal for each of the three orders, and that the king should be intreated not to suffer any violation of this equality of suffrages, which they considered as the safeguard of the state, and as the firm support of the constitution, as well as of civil and political liberty. They all recognized, that no resolution could be legally formed without the concurrence of the three orders; that two would have no right to engage the third, and that the *veto* of one only would thus suffice to guarantee its liberty. But this principle itself founded for them the right of respective equality. "Such is in France," said they, "the balance of the public forces; it does not give to the third estate an unjust ascendancy over the two other orders; but it assigns to it the measure of power; it does not authorize it to give them law; but it does not suffer law to be imposed on it. Now the double deputation, if it should be granted to the commons, would destroy this relation of equality and independence; it would lead to the form of individual suffrage; it would inspire the idea of it; it would excite attempts to establish it; and who could calculate its pernicious consequences? The first deliberation of the states would be directed to that object, and its effects would be to produce in that assembly the most dangerous fermentation."

Thus the second question, that is, what should be the form of

deliberating? could admit of no doubt; and, with the exception of the board of *Monsieur*, which left the choice of it to the states, all demanded that the votes of each order should be separate.

The reasons of the minority for demanding the double representation in favour of the commons were, that in supposing the votes to be taken by order, it was just and natural that, in an assembly where the laws, the arts, industry, commerce, agriculture, finance, would perpetually be submitted to discussion, the class, informed by profession on all these objects, should at least be of equal force with the class that made no study of them; for it must often happen that the object of the deliberation would be of such a nature as to require individual suffrage; that then, above all, the right which the commons would have to the power of opposing two voices to two other united voices, was as indisputable as the right they had not to suffer themselves to be eternally governed.

No one, it was added, could dispute the right of the States-general to regulate their own interior polity, and to determine the manner in which the suffrages should be given and counted. On taxation, for example, it would be impossible, without manifest injustice, to decide by the absolute majority of individual votes, if of three votes the commons had but one; for the interest of the nobles and the clergy being inseparable on that article, their opinions would be so likewise; and there would then be only two parties, one of which would be double to the other.

With respect to the elections, all the boards, seduced by this principle, that confidence should alone determine the choice, rendered the conditions of the right of electing and of being elected as trivial as possible: no regard to property; and, by means of a moderate contribution, every inhabitant would have, in his bailliwick, the right of being an elector, and would be eligible. In the same manner every clergyman, having in preferment, or in private property, the income of a village rector, might be an elector, and could be elected.

At the time these questions were agitated out of doors, the public had laid hold of them, and in conversation, as well as in books and pamphlets, the cause of the people was pleaded with warmth and vehemence.

At the very opening of the assembly of the *notables*, in the committee which *Monsieur* presided, the Prince de Conti, denouncing those publications with which France was inundated, said:—"Be pleased, *Monsieur*, to represent to the king how important it is for the stability of his throne; for the laws and for good order, that all new systems should be proscribed for ever, and that the constitution and its ancient forms should be maintained in their integrity." If Necker had been struck with this foresight, as he ought to have been, he would not have directed the king to answer, that this object was not one of those for which he had assembled the *notables*.

All the cities in the kingdom were occupied with the object of the deputations; and not only the right of nine-tenths of the nation, in competition with the two-twentieths, was every where insisted on, in favour of the third estate, but the right still more in-



contestable, which this industrious class derived in the state from the importance of its labours. Brave and docile in war, indefatigable in agriculture, active in commerce, security, wealth, plenty, force, knowledge, enjoyment of every kind, all flowed from it; and with this class, the force and guardian of all good, a few men, for the most part idle and richly endowed, were disputing its right of being admitted, in equal number with their deputies, into the national council; and, to hold it in subjection, they would arrogate to themselves an eternal ascendancy over it. It was thus that the popular societies roused themselves to defend their rights; and this nascent liberty, which it would have been as necessary as difficult to repress, seducing every mind.

The moment at length arrived when it was requisite that the king should form some decision, either from the votes of the assembly of the *notables*, or from the petitions addressed to him by all the cities and provinces of the kingdom. This was the object of the state council of the 27th of December, 1788. Necker there made his report of the votes of all the boards on the most important points, particularly on the number of deputies for each of the three orders; and, after having weighed all the authorities, the examples, the reflections, the motives for and against, giving his own opinion, he said, "I think that the king can, and ought, to call to the states-general a number of deputies from the third estate, equal to the number of deputies from the two other orders united, not, as might be feared, to force the assembly to deliberate by individual suffrage, but to satisfy the general and reasonable wish of the commons of his kingdom." Necker's advice was that of the council, and the king resolved that the letters of convocation should be conformable to it. Thus, on the essential article, Necker appeared to have consulted the *notables*, only to authorize himself with their decision, if it were favourable to the people, or to reject it if it were not so, and to give time to the provinces to declare their opinion aloud.

Necker does not dissemble that he wished to see established, and in a lasting way, a just relation between the revenues and the expenses of the state, a prudent use of credit, an equal distribution of taxes, a general plan of beneficence, and an enlightened system of legislation; above all, a continual guarantee for civil and political liberty; and he only hoped for all these advantages from the states-general, in case the commons could there command the respect to their just reclamations. The *veto* of one of the three orders, if they voted by chambers, appeared to him an invincible and perpetual obstacle to the best resolutions. He wished therefore that they might have recourse to individual suffrage; which could only be equitable in case the commons should be in equal number with the clergy and the nobility. It was from these two orders, leagued with the parliaments, that the opposition to the collection of the twentieths had arisen; it was to break this league that the government had recourse to the commons. Then, too, the language of the commons was the expression of sentiments most favourable, both to the royal authority, and to the person of the king. It was by this language that the minister was deceived.

You have just seen that the *notables*, by reducing to a moderate contribution the title to the right of electing, and of being eligible, had rendered it independent of all real property, at the risk of admitting a great number of men indifferent to the fate of the state. Necker, in the illusion which he had the misfortune to indulge on the attention the people would pay to a worthy choice of their deputies, and on the character of prudence and probity that a sacred respect for their functions would impress on the representatives of the people, thought it his duty, like the *notables*, to clog as little as possible the freedom of the elections; and to fix, as low as he could, that quota of contribution which should confer the right of being eligible. This was one of his errors. In granting to the third estate equality of number, he ought indeed to have foreseen that a part of the clergy would range itself on the side of the people; and yet he gave to this popular clergy all the means of uniting in considerable force in the first elections: every rector was admissible, whilst he granted to the collegiates only one representative for each chapter. The rectors then would, necessarily, be elected in great numbers, and would augment in the states the party to which they were connected by consanguinity as well as by habit, and yet more by that old hatred for the high clergy, over which they had so long brooded.

However, as this advantage was too evident, if the sense of the assembly were taken by individual suffrage, the minister granted to the first orders the liberty of not voting in that way, but by their own free consent; a source of dissension in which the weakest would necessarily fall.

Here is the critical moment at which the conduct of this minister ceases to be irreproachable. Never was man more distant than he from that perfidious infidelity of which the iniquity of the times has accused him. But as to the security of his confidence, in a people whose character the *League* and the *Fronde* should have taught him to understand, it is too true that nothing can excuse him.

To fulfil the duties of a public man, those of a citizen, and those of the servant of a young and virtuous king, it was most surely requisite, as he himself has said, *to enlighten his justice, to direct his inclinations, and secure to him the enjoyment of the first of the favours of the throne, the happiness of his people, and their heart full benediction.* But it was requisite, too, to enlighten his prudence, as well as his justice; to advertise him, on his way, of the risks he was about to run; not to cover with flowers the brink of the precipice, but carefully to guide him from it, and observe whether, instead of benedictions, he would not be exposed to outrage and cruel insult. The king resigned himself to the prudence of his minister; this, for the latter, was a sacred obligation to be wary, timid, and distrustful. Necker was not enough so. There were great evils to fear; he could only foresee good.

With a mind naturally romantic, solitary, abstract, reserved, he was communicative to few men, and few men were tempted to be communicative to him; he only knew them by views that were too isolated, or too vague; and thence his illusions on the character of the people, to whose mercy he committed the state and the king.

The continual struggle that he had constantly been compelled to sustain against all the factions of private interest, had given him a very unfavourable idea of the court and the nobles; and he judged of them sanely. But the opinion he had formed to himself of the mass of the nation was absurdly fantastic and infinitely too flattering. He had heard himself praised, blessed, exalted by the people; he had enjoyed their confidence, their love, their regret; it was this same people who had revenged him for the base attacks of calumny; it was their voice that had recalled him from exile to the ministry, and which still sustained him there. Bound by gratitude, he was not less so by the benefits he bestowed; and personally obliged to think this people feeling and just, he persuaded himself that they would always be so. Thus his own example induced him to forget others that should have advertised him of the inconstancy of those whose cause he was pleading, of their levity, of their facility in passing from one excess to the other, in suffering themselves to be corrupted, bewildered, irritated even to frenzy, and to the most brutal fury.

In a class above the people, but belonging to the people, he would not see how many obscure and timid passions only awaited some focus that should unite them, in order to disclose, take fire, and burst forth together. Vanity, pride, envy, the ambition of governing, or at least of humbling those whose elevation was looked at with a jealous eye; interests more vile, and vices still more base, the speculations of cupidity, the calculations of venal souls; all eternal germs of faction, and of discord, were elements that Necker seemed not to have discovered. The abstract and seducing idea of a gentle, lovely, generous nation, preoccupied all his mind.

In this species of intoxication, he did not imagine that he was granting too much favour to the popular party. After having secured to it a constant majority, he wanted to add the advantage of situation to this advantage of number. The security, the freedom, the tranquillity that should attend the deliberations, essentially demanded a place inaccessible to the insults of the people; a place easy to guard from every species of tumult; and he, again forgetting prudence, thought only of placing the states-general in Paris, amidst the people most numerous, most easy to agitate, most prompt to rebel, and most formidable in their rebellion: it was only deference to the opinion of the council that induced him to content himself with fixing them at Versailles, *statio male fida carinis*.

The hall which was destined for the general assemblies, and in which the greatest interests of the state would be discussed by the three orders, was surrounded by galleries, as if to invite the people to come and listen to the debate, to support their own party, to insult, to threaten, to intimidate their opponents, and change the tribune into a stage, where they might encourage and warm their actors by applause. I mark these details, because they have been of the weightiest importance. But M. Necker would only figure to himself the assembly of the states as a peaceful, imposing, solemn, august spectacle, which the people would delight to contemplate. His hopes were never unmixed with inquietude; but, as he attributed great power to moral feeling, he flattered himself that the

surest way of preventing the troubles, that might arise from the discord of the three orders, was to animate them all with that enthusiasm for the public good, which renders facile and gentle the greatest sacrifice of the interests of a corps, and of the interests of the individual. He made his first trial of it in the publication of his report to the council of state of the 27th of December 1788; and it was by the example of the king himself that he hoped to inspire, from that moment, this generous emulation.

In calling to mind the confession which the king had made to him, *that, for some years past, he had only had moments of happiness*: "Sire," said he, "you will recover this happiness, and you will enjoy it. You command a nation that knows how to love. If political novelties, for which it is not calculated, have diverted it for a moment from its natural character, soon fixed by your beneficence, and strengthened in its confidence by the purity of your intentions, it will think only of enjoying that happy and constant order which it will owe to you. This grateful nation does not yet know all that you intend to do for its happiness. You have told it, Sire, to your ministers who are honoured with your confidence; you not only desire to ratify the promise you have made to impose no new tax without the consent of the states, but it is your will that none be prolonged without that condition. You are determined to secure the return of the states-general, by consulting them on the interval of their convocations, and on the means of giving to these dispositions a lasting stability. To form a solid boundary between the private administration of each province and the general legislation, you desire that the deputies from every part of the kingdom should concert together on the most eligible plan, and your majesty is disposed to give it your assent. It is likewise your majesty's wish to prevent, in the most efficacious manner, the disorder which the misconduct or the incapacity of your ministers might introduce into the finances; and in the number of expenses that you desire to limit, you do not even except those which belong more particularly to your own person. Your majesty purposes to anticipate the legitimate wish of your subjects, by inviting the states-general to examine the great question that has arisen on *lettres-de-cacher*. You only wish, Sire, for the maintenance of order, and you are willing to abandon to the law all that it can execute. It is on the same principle that your majesty is impatient for the counsel of the states-general, on the measure of freedom that should be granted to the press, and to the publication of works relative to administration. In short, Sire, you prefer, with reason, the lasting decisions of the states-general of your kingdom, to the transient counsels of your ministers; and when you shall have proved the wisdom and prudence of that august body, you will not fear to give it a stability that may inspire confidence, and protect it against all changes in the sentiments of the kings your successors."

This speech of the minister, printed, published, and spread throughout the kingdom, as the solemn pledge of the king's intentions, gave him a legitimate title to the confidence of the people; and if, in pursuance of these dispositions, the states had been pleased to constitute themselves the supreme council of a king who was

only desirous of what was just, and who desired all that was just, of a king who, in concert with the nation, was resolved to fix on stable bases the very bounds of his own power, and the column of liberty, and public happiness, the French monarchy, without changing its nature, would have become the mildest, the most moderate, and most solid government that ever existed. The king, in this legislative council of the nation, was going to preside like a father, to consult with his children, to regulate, to conciliate their rights rather as a friend than an arbiter, and to reduce with them into laws the means of rendering them happy. It was in this spirit that the minister thought he was disposing every thing, to give to the nation, and preserve to the crown, that character of grandeur, of power and of majesty, which this intimate union should insure, and which separately they could never fully enjoy. It is thus that the king expressed it.

But, in a petulant and inconstant people, who are suddenly eager to be free, before they have learned to be so, it is but too natural that the first enthusiastic transport should carry them beyond the bounds of that freedom; and, when these bounds are once overleaped, the rest is the dominion of passion, of error and of crime.

## BOOK XIV.

ALTHOUGH Paris was the nurse and parent of that fermentation which was excited throughout the kingdom, the primary assemblies were there marked by no disturbances, and appeared to be wholly occupied with the choice of good electors, in order to have good representatives.

I was of the number of electors named for the section of *les Feuillans*; I was also one of the commissioners charged with the statement of the demands for the removal of certain grievances; and I can say that, in these demands, there was nothing but what was useful and just. Thus the spirit of this section was reasonable and temperate.

It was not the same with the electoral assembly; the major part of it was at first sane; but we were assailed by a cloud of intriguers, who came to exhale among us the contagious air which they had breathed in the conferences of Duport, one of the factious members of the parliament.

Whether Duport was sincere in his dangerous fanaticism, or whether, having calculated better than his company the risks it was about to run, he wished to secure to himself a political existence, it was well known that, from the preceding winter, at his own house, he had opened, as it were, a school of republicanism, to

which his friends were careful to invite the most ardent minds, or those most disposed to enthusiasm.

I observed this class of turbulent and noisy men, who were ever eager to debate, impatient to distinguish themselves, and aspiring to the honour of being inscribed on the list of orators. It was not long before I saw what would be their influence; and, in leading on my fancy from one particular example to a general induction, I recognized that such, in every town, would be the organs of faction, lawyers versed in chicanery, and men accustomed to speak in public.

It is an acknowledged truth, that no people governs itself; that the opinion, the will of an assembled multitude is always, or almost always, only an impulse which it receives from a few men, and sometimes from one single man, who influences its sentiments and its will, and who moves and conducts it. The people have their passions; but these passions slumber tranquilly till some voice agitates and awakens them. They have been compared to the sails of a vessel, which hang loose or languidly floating, till some fresh breeze swells them.

It is well known, that the eloquence of the tribune has at all times been exerted to move the passions of the people; and among us the only school for this popular eloquence was the bar. Even those who, in pleading, had only acquired its assurance, its action, and its declamation, had a very great advantage over the unpractised individual. A cool reason, a solid and reflecting mind, that wanted abundant and facile elocution, could never support itself against the vehemence of a disciplined declaimer.

The surest way of propagating the revolutionary doctrine, throughout the kingdom, had therefore been to engage the corps of lawyers in its favour; and nothing had been more easy. Republicans by character, proud and jealous of their freedom, prone to govern, by the habit of holding in their hands the fortune of their clients, scattered throughout the realm, enjoying public confidence and public esteem, constantly communicating with all ranks of society, exercised in the art of moving the heart and subjugating the will, this class of lawyers could not but have an irresistible ascendancy over the multitude; and some by the force of genuine eloquence, others by that flow and noise of words that make weak heads giddy, and impose on them by idle sounds, could not fail to excel in the popular assemblies, and to govern opinion there; above all, in announcing themselves as the avengers of the people's wrongs, and the defender of its rights.

You may conceive what interest this corps itself had to see reform change into revolution, and monarchy into republic; such a change offered to it the prospect of a perpetual aristocracy, which it would be requisite to organize. Successively destined to be the leaders of republican faction, nothing could be more welcome to ambitious men, who, in consideration of their knowledge and their talents, would, in their turn, be every where elected to public functions, and would alone, or almost alone, be the legislators of France; first its chief magistrates, and soon its real sovereigns.

- This prospect was the same, not only for those who practised the profession of the law, but for all classes of well-educated citizens, among whom each presumed that he had talent enough to indulge the same hope, with the same ambition.

I do not deny that this ambition had an honest and a laudable pretext. In human institutions, it is impossible that all should be perfect; it is infinitely rare that all is as good, or as little defective, as possible. A government is always a machine more or less subject to frequent changes. It is necessary then, at least at intervals, either to regulate its movements, or give new vigour to its spring; and whatever be the monarchical or republican state, whose form you examine, there is no one whose condition does not appear alarming, when in the same picture you see accumulated all the vices, crimes, and abuses of the times that are passed. It was thus that the reign of Lewis XVI was calumniated. Whatever were the faults, and errors, which he himself had not been able to avoid, he only desired to leave no trace of them, and no one wished more earnestly than he for that salutary reform; but revolution was unhappily disguised under the vague and deceitful name of reformation; and this disguise explains the almost universal success of a plan that, offering to the view, under different aspects, virtue, utility, and justice, accommodated itself to all characters, and conciliated every wish.

The most virtuous citizens thought they harmonised in will and intention with the most wicked; and, whether animated by the love of public good, by a desire of glory and of sway, by a base envy, or an infamous ardour for rapine and for plunder, all followed the same impulse, and from these diverse motions the result was the same, the subversion of the state. This reflection seems to me to offer some apology for a great number of men who have been thought depraved, and who were only misled.

That some few men, with dispositions like tigers, might have premeditated the revolution as it has been executed, is perhaps not inconceivable; but that the French nation, that the populace itself, before it was corrupted, would have consented to this barbarous, impious, and sacrilegious plot, is what no one, I believe, will dare to maintain. It is false, therefore, that the crimes of the revolution have been the crimes of the nation; and I am far from supposing that any one of my colleagues in the electoral assembly could even have foreseen them.

It was, I believe, with a blind enthusiasm for the public good, that this troop of lawyers joined us; they were supported by a train of ambitious republicans, who, like them, aspired to render themselves celebrated in the councils of a free people. Target, distinguished at the bar, and well famed among us, came to play the first part there.

The government had sent us the minister of police as our president. This was a false step, for it was indefensible. An assembly essentially free had a right to a president taken from its own body, and at its own choice. This magistrate sustained his mission honourably: his firmness and his prudence commanded our admiration; but in vain. The case was definitively pleaded,

with him by Target, the lawyer; and the latter, for having defended the rights of the assembly, was proclaimed its president.

A champion, long exercised in the combats of the bar, armed with assurance and audacity, tormented by ambition, and encompassed by a circle of noisy applauders, he began by insinuating himself into the favour of all, as a conciliating and pacific man. But, when he had gotten full possession of this assembly of citizens, all yet new in the functions of public men, he laid aside the mask he had worn, and assumed his real character. Instead of confining himself, as the duties of his place directed, to a faithful exposition of the state of the questions submitted to the examination of the assembly, instead of collecting, summing up, and declaring its opinion, he dictated it.

Our functions were not confined to the election of deputies; we had likewise to form their instructions for complaints and petitions, and demands; and every grievance gave rise to fresh declamation. The indefinite words of equality, liberty, and the sovereignty of the people, resounded in our ears; each heard them, and each interpreted them as his fancy dictated. In the regulations of police, in the money edicts, in the gradations of authority, on which order and public tranquillity rest, there was nothing in which some character of tyranny was not found; and a ridiculous importance was attributed to the minutest details. I will cite but one example of it.

The subject was the wall and gates of Paris, which were denounced as calculated only to confine beasts, and as most offensive to men.

"I have seen," said one of the orators to us, "yes, citizens, I have seen at the gate Saint Victor, on one of the pillars, in sculpture, will you believe it? I have seen the enormous head of a lion, open jawed, and vomiting chains, with which he threatens the passengers. Is it possible to imagine a more fearful emblem of despotism and of slavery?" The orator himself imitated the lion's roar. The whole audience was moved: and I, who so often passed by the gate Saint Victor, was astonished that this horrible image should never have struck me. On that day therefore I paid particular attention to it; and on the pilaster I saw, as an ornament, a shield suspended by a small chain, which the sculptor had fixed to a little lion's muzzle, such as we see on the knocker of a door, or on the cock of a fountain.

Intrigue had also its secret committees, where our most saintly maxims, and most sacred institutions, were stripped of all respect. Neither morality nor religion was spared there. It was there represented, according to the doctrine of Mirabeau, that politics are incompatible with morality, religion with patriotism, and old prejudices with new virtues. Royalty and tyranny, obedience and slavery, power and oppression, were there declared to be inseparable under the government of a single man.

On the contrary, if the people should regain its rights of equality and independence, hopes and promises were madly exaggerated. It seemed that men of the golden age were to be revived for our governors. This free, just, and enlightened people, ever in har-



nomy with itself, ever prudent in the choice of its councils and its ministers, temperate in the use of its force and of its power, would never be misled, never deceived, never subjugated nor enslaved by the authorities in which it should confide. Its will would be its laws, and its laws would secure its happiness.

Although I was most isolated, and that my party in the electoral assembly was every day becoming more feeble, I did not cease to tell whoever would listen to me, how gross and easy this art of imposing by impudent declamation appeared to me. My principles were known; I dissembled none of them; and care was taken to whisper, in every ear, that I was the friend of the ministry, and loaded with the favours of the king. The elections were terminated. I was not elected: the Abbé Sieyès was preferred to me; I thanked heaven for my exclusion; for I thought I foresaw what would pass in the national assembly; and shortly afterward I was better informed of it.

We had in the French academy one of the most violent partisans of the republican faction: it was Chamfort, a man of most delicate, subtle, and enchanting wit, when he gaily indulged it on the vices and follies of society; but sourly and sharply malevolent against the superiorities of rank and fortune that wounded his jealous pride. Of all the envious men that are scattered in society, Chamfort was he who least pardoned the rich and the great for the opulence of their houses, and the delicacies of their tables, but of which he himself delighted to partake. In their presence; and in his private intercourse with them, he humoured, flattered, and studied to please them; it seemed even that he loved and esteemed some of them whose praises he pompously told: yet, if he had the complaisance to be their guest, or their inmate, it was well understood that he was to obtain, by their interest, some literary compensation from the court; and the pensions he enjoyed to the amount of some hundred pounds did not acquit them of this obligation: what he received was too little for him. "Those people there," said he to Florian, "ought to get me eight hundred a year; I do not deserve less." At this price, there were some of the great whom he would honour with his preference, and except from his satires. But, as for the class in general, he lashed it without pity; and when he thought he saw these fortunes and this grandeur on the point of being overthrown, and neither any longer capable of serving him, he divorced himself from them wholly, and ranged himself on the side of the people.

In our societies, we sometimes amused ourselves with the sallies of his humour; and, without liking him, I treated him with caution and politeness, because I did not wish to make him my enemy.

One day then, when we were left alone at the Louvre, after the sitting of the academy: "Well," said he, "so you are not a deputy?"—"No," answered I, "and I console myself as the fox did when he could not reach the grapes: *they are too sour*."—"Indeed," replied he, "I do not think them ripe enough for you. Your soul is of a temper too mild and too flexible for the trial to which it would be submitted. It is good that you should be reserved for.

another legislature. Excellent to improve, you are worth nothing to destroy."

As I knew that Chamfort was the friend and confidant of Mirabeau, one of the chiefs of the faction, I imagined myself at the source of the information I wished to obtain; and, to engage him to explain himself, I feigned not to understand him. "You alarm me," said I, "by talking of destroying; I thought the only wish was to repair."

"—Yes," he replied, "but repairs only produce ruins: in attacking an old wall, it is impossible to say that it will not tumble under the hammer; and I must frankly own, the edifice is here so dilapidated that I should not be astonished if it should prove necessary to pull it down to the ground."—"Why not," rejoined Chamfort, "and erect it on a less gothic and more regular plan? Would it, for instance, be so great an evil that it should not have so many stories, and that all should be on one floor? Would it grieve you to hear no more of your eminence, your grace, your lordship, nor of titles, nor heraldry, nor nobility, nor feudal tenure, nor of the high and low clergy?"—I observed, "that equality had always been the chimera of republics, and the lure that ambition offered to vanity. But this level is above all impossible in a vast monarchy; and that to wish to abolish all is going much farther than the nation intends, and much farther than it asks."

"—As for that," replied he, "does the nation know what it wishes? Its wishes will be directed, and it will be made to say what it has never imagined; if it hesitate, it will be answered as Crispin answers the legate: *it is your lethargy*. The nation is a great flock, that thinks only of feeding, and that shepherds with good dogs can lead at their will. And, beside, it is its own happiness that all wish to secure without its knowledge; for, indeed, my good friend, neither your old regulations, nor your religion, nor your morality, nor all your antiquated prejudices, deserve any indulgence. They are all but a wretched disgrace to an age like ours; and, to trace a new plan, it is quite right to clear the ground completely."

"—Clear the ground completely!" insisted I, "and the throne, and the altar," answered he, "will fall together: they are two buttresses supported by each other; break but one of them, and the other gives way."

I concealed the impression which this language made on me, and to draw him on still farther: "You announce to me," said I, "an enterprise in which I think I see more difficulties than means."

"Believe me," replied he, "the difficulties are foreseen, and the means are calculated." He then developed himself, and I learnt that the calculations of the faction were founded on the character of the king, which was so distant from violence that it was considered as pusillanimous; on the actual state of the clergy, which only consisted, he said, of a few virtues without talents, and a few talents disgraced and dishonoured by vices; finally, on the condition of the high nobility, which was said to be degenerated, and in which few great characters supported the lustre of a great name.

But it was above all in itself that the third estate ought to place its confidence. This order, long wearied with an arbitrary authority, whose tyranny extended into its minutest ramifications, had over the other two not only the advantage of number, but that of union, and that of courage and audacity to brave every thing. "In short," said Chamfort, "this vast hoard of impatience and indignation, formed like a storm, and that storm ready to burst, commotion and insurrection every where declared, and at the signal given by the province of Dauphiny, the whole kingdom ready to answer, by acclamation, that it demands to be free, the provinces leagued, their correspondence established, and from Paris, as from their centre, the republican spirit bearing to the distant cities its warmth and its light: such is the state of our cause. Are these vain and airy projects?"

I confessed that in speculation they were very imposing; but I added that beyond the bounds of temperate reform, the best part of the nation would suffer no wound to be made in the laws of the country, and in the fundamental principles of the monarchy.

He agreed that in the welcome circle of their families, in their shops, in their offices, in their manufactories, great numbers of those peaceful domestic citizens would probably find all projects too bold which might disturb their repose and their enjoyments. "But if they should disapprove them," said he, "it will only be timidly and without noise, while to impose on and beguile them, there is that determined class which sees nothing that it can lose by change, and thinks it sees every thing to gain by it."

"To raise this mob, the most powerful springs of human action will not be neglected; scarcity, famine, money, reports of alarm and affright, the madness of fear and of rage afford pictures that will be diligently presented to the view. You have heard only elegant speakers among the citizens; but, be assured, that all our orators of the tribune are nothing in comparison with the Demostheneses at half-a-crown a head, who, in the brandy shops, in the public squares, in the gardens, and on the quays, announce devastation and fire, villages sacked and inundated with blood, and plots to besiege and to starve Paris. These are what I call eloquent men. Beside, money and the hope of plunder are all-powerful among this people. We have just made a trial of it in the fauxbourg Saint-Antoine, and you would scarcely believe how little it has cost the Duke d'Orleans to get the manufactory of the honest Reveillon sacked and pillaged, which, among this same people, insured the maintenance of a hundred families. Mirabeau ludicrously maintains that with a thousand guineas one may make a very pretty sedition."

"Thus," said I, "your trials are crimes, and your trained forces are villains.—" And that 's very necessary," answered he coolly. "What would you do with all these people in muzzling them with your principles of honesty and justice? Virtuous men are feeble, personal, and timid; 'tis knaves only that are determined. The advantage of the people in revolutions is to have no morality. How will you defend yourself against men to whom all means are welcome? Mirabeau is right: there is not one of our old virtues

that can serve us : the mob has no need of them, or it needs others of another stamp. All that is necessary to effect the revolution, all that is useful and appropriate to it : this is the grand principle."

"—“ It is perhaps that of the Duke d'Orleans," replied I; "but I see no other leader for this people in insurrection, and, I confess, I have no very high opinion of his courage."—" You are right," said he, "and Mirabeau, who knows him well, says, that to reckon on him would be building on sand; but he has shewn himself popular, he bears a name that imposes, he has thousands to scatter, he hates the king, he hates the queen still more, and, if he should want courage, there are those who will give it him; for even among the people there will be intrepid chiefs, above all from the moment when they shall have shewn themselves rebels, and shall think themselves criminal; for there is no retiring when we see behind us no retreat but the scaffold. Fear, without hope of safety, is the true courage of the people. Our forces will be immense if the number of our accomplices be so. "But," added he, "I see that my hopes sadden you; you wish for no liberty that is earned by an abundance of blood and of treasure. Do you want to have revolutions made for you with rose water?"

Here our conversations ended, and we separated; he, without doubt, full of contempt for my minute scruples, and I very little satisfied with his hardy immorality. The wretch has punished himself for it by destroying his own life, as soon as he recognized his errors.

I communicated this conversation to the Abbé Maury on the evening of the same day. "It is but too true," said he, "that they scarcely deceive themselves in their speculations, and that to find few obstacles the faction has well chosen its time. I have observed the two parties. My resolution is fixed to perish on the breach; but I still feel the sad conviction that they will take the place by assault, and that it will be abandoned to pillage."

"—“ If that be the case," answered I, "what madness can induce the clergy and the nobility to suffer the king to engage in this contest?"—"What would you have them do?"—"What is done in a fire: I would have them abandon something to the flame, supply the deficit by charging themselves with the public debt; set afloat the vessel of the state; extricate the king from the rocks amid which they have themselves engaged him, and, at whatever price, persuade him to dismiss the states-general, before they be assembled. I would wish them to be informed, that they are lost if the states meet, and that there is not a moment to lose in order to dissipate the storm that is about to burst over them." Maury made me some objections; I would hear none. "Well," said he, "since you require it, I will take the step that you recommend; but I shall not be listened to."

Unhappily, he addressed himself to the bishop of \*\*, a man with an empty head, who treated my opinions as chimeras. He answered, "That things were not as they seemed to be, and that, with the sword in one hand, and the crucifix in the other, the church would defend its rights."

Released from my deputation at the electoral assembly, I retired to the country to seek the repose I wanted; and I then stole away from a new society that was forming at my house: it was composed of men that I should have delighted to assemble together in times more peaceful. They were the Abbé de Périgord, lately become bishop of Autun; the Count de Narbonne, and the Marquis de la Fayette. I had seen them in society, as free as myself from intrigues and from cares: the first, with a sage, mild and inviting wit; the second, with a lively, brilliant, and ingenious gaiety; the last, with a cordiality full of charm and of grace, and all three of the most engaging converse.

But, in their rendezvous at my house, I saw their tempers clouded by a cast of politics; and, from some expressions that escaped them, I suspected a change with which my principles did not harmonize. They perceived, as well as myself, that, in their conferences and political relations, my house was not a place of rendezvous for them. My retreat separated us.

Those days of the week on which I went to the academy, I used to sleep at Paris, and I frequently passed the evenings at M. Necker's. There, in the circle of the ministers, I spoke to them with an open heart of all I had seen and all I had learned. I found them quite stupified, and not knowing which way to turn their heads. What was passing at Versailles had undeceived M. Necker, and I saw him in consternation. Being invited to dine at his house with the principal deputies of the commons, I thought I could there remark, from the coldness with which they answered his politeness and his attentions, that they were willing enough to have him for their steward, but not for their guide.

M. de Montmorin, to whom I spoke to persuade the king to retire into one of his fortified towns, and at the head of his armies, brought as objections the want of money, bankruptcy, and civil war.

"Do you think then," asked he, "that the danger is so imminent as to require so sudden a recourse to extremes?"—"I think it so imminent and so pressing," said I, "that, in a month from this time, I would neither answer for the liberty of the king, nor for his life, nor for your own."

Alas! Chamfort had made me a prophet. But I was not listened to, or rather I was so by a weak minister, who was not a weak man.

In the mean time, the deputies of the three orders had repaired to Versailles, nearly in the number prescribed: three hundred of the order of the clergy, three hundred of the order of the nobility, and six hundred of the order of the third estate, including those of the city of Paris, who did not arrive till a few days afterward.

The opening of the assembly took place on the fifth of May. Never had the nation been so fully represented; never had its representatives been intrusted with interests so weighty; never too had so much talent and knowledge been united to labour in concert at the great work of public utility: never in fine did a better and more virtuous king offer himself to contribute to it. What happiness a blind system of revolution has destroyed!

The king, in all the splendor and pomp of majesty, accompanied by the queen and the two princes, his brothers, by the princes of his blood, the peers of his kingdom, the officers of his crown, the keeper of the seal, and the minister of finance, repaired to the hall of the assembled states.

He appeared with simple dignity, without pride, without timidity, bearing on his countenance the character of that goodness which filled his soul, tenderly moved with the sight, and with the feeling which the view of the representatives of a faithful nation should necessarily inspire in its king.

Nothing could be more sincere than the air, the tone, the simple and cordial expression, the accent of the soul, with which he pronounced the speech that I am going to transcribe.

"*Gentlemen*, this day, which my heart has long wished for, is at length arrived, and I see myself surrounded by the representatives of the nation, which I consider it as my glory to command. A long interval has elapsed since the last session of the states-general; and, although the convocation of these assemblies has fallen into disuse, I have not hesitated to re-establish a custom from which the kingdom may derive new force, and which may open to the nation a new source of happiness.

"The debt of the state, immense as it was at my accession to the throne, has still increased under my reign: an expensive but honourable war has been its cause; an augmentation of the taxes has been the necessary effect, and has rendered their unequal distribution more oppressive. A general inquietude, an immoderate desire of innovation, have seized on the public mind, and would end by totally misleading opinions, if we did not hasten to fix them by a re-union of wise and temperate councils.

"It is in this confidence, *Gentlemen*, that I have assembled you; and I see with sensibility, that it has been already justified by the dispositions that the two first orders have shown to renounce their pecuniary interests. The hope that I have indulged of seeing all the orders unite in sentiments to concur with me to the general good of the state will not be deceived.

"I have already ordered considerable retrenchments in the expenditure. You will present to me on this subject the ideas your wisdom may suggest; and I shall receive them with eagerness. But, notwithstanding the resources which the severest economy may offer, I fear, *Gentlemen*, that I shall not be able to relieve my subjects so speedily as I should wish.

"I shall direct the exact state of the finances to be laid before you; and when you have examined it, I already feel confident that you will propose to me the most efficacious means of establishing in them permanent order, and confirming public credit. This great and salutary work, which will secure the happiness of the kingdom within, and its consideration without, will occupy you essentially.

"The public mind is agitated; but an assembly of the representatives of the nation will, without doubt, only listen to the counsels of wisdom and of prudence. You must yourselves have

*felt, Gentlemen*, that these counsels have been swerved from on many recent occasions. But the reigning spirit of your deliberations will correspond with the true sentiments of a generous nation, whose love for its king has ever been its distinguishing character. I discard every other recollection.

"I know the authority and the power of a virtuous king, in the midst of a faithful people attached at all times to the principles of monarchy. These principles have formed the glory and the lustre of France; I ought to be their support, and I will constantly be so. But all that can be expected from the tenderest interest in the public welfare, all that can be asked of a sovereign, the first friend of his people, you may, and ought to hope for from my feelings.

"That a happy harmony may reign in this assembly, and that this epoch may become ever memorable for the happiness and prosperity of the kingdom, is the wish of my heart; it is the most ardent of my vows; it is, in short, the prize that I expect from the rectitude of my own intentions and my love for my people."

These words of the king made the most favourable impression on the assembly.

The keeper of the seal, according to custom, developed the intentions of the king; he observed, that in ancient times military service being at the expense of the nobility, and the subsistence of widows, of orphans, and of the indigent, being provided for out of the property of the church, this kind of contribution acquitted them toward the state; but now that the church had considerable wealth, and that the nobility obtained honorary and pecuniary recompences, the possessions of these two orders ought to be subject to the common law of taxation. Among the objects which ought to fix the attention of the assembly, he indicated the useful changes that civil legislation and the proceedings in criminal law might require; and, in acknowledging the necessity of rendering the administration of justice more facile, of correcting its abuses, of limiting its expenses, of exhausting the source of those never-ending discussions which ruined families, and of enabling the accused to obtain a prompt trial, he tacitly rendered homage to the principles of Lamoignon.

Lastly, by the express order of the king, the director general of the finances rose and exposed their actual situation; and without dissembling the evil, he indicated its remedy. Over this picture, so alarming in shade, he spread a *cheering* light; and with the most afflicting avowals he mixed the consolations of a courageous hope. He shewed that the most pressing and most difficult object, the equality to establish between the revenues and the fixed expenditure, did not even require the aid of one new tax; that the actual deficit would be supplied by simple reductions and light economies. As to the resources that were left him for the exigencies of the present year, for the extraordinary expenses of the two following, for the successive extinction of old debts, for the diminution of those with which the revenues of future years were burdened, and lastly, for the discharge of

those more urgent that were actually due, he indicated them all, in the progressive extinction of life annuities, in the profits to be gained by economy, and by new ameliorations, in the increased produce of the taxes when more equally imposed, and more regularly collected. In fine, sure of obtaining from time to time, and from national credit, the only legitimate and proper means of relieving the public burdens, he would adopt no others; and he rejected, as unworthy of a king, and of a magnanimous nation, every species of corruption in the faith of engagements.

“Let greater precautions,” said he, “be taken for the future; it is the king’s desire, it is the king’s will. But, an epoch so solemn, when the nation is called by its sovereign to surround him, not for a moment, but for ever; at an epoch when this nation is to associate itself as it were to the thoughts and to the wishes of its king, what it will desire to second, with the greatest earnestness, is the principle of honour and fidelity with which he is animated. This protection granted to the creditors of the state, this long and constant fidelity, will one day be a great monument of the moral character of his majesty; for, by renouncing them, the king would have wanted no succours; and that perhaps is the first counsel that modern machiavelists would not have failed to give him.”

To these maxims of justice and of probity, Necker added the great interest of the political power, of which these principles were the basis: and with the same eloquence with which he had pleaded the cause of the creditors of the state, he pleaded that of the pensioners. His loyalty was applauded.

But when, in speaking of certain conditional instructions, in which the engagements to be formed with respect to the finances were considered as a secondary object, which ought to be preceded by all the concessions and all the assurances that the nation should require, the minister observed that the exigencies of the finances were only public exigencies; that the expenses of the state did not concern the nation less than the monarch; that its safety, its repose, its defence, all the advantages of its public existence, were dependent on them, and that an obligation so absolute as that of providing for them precluded the freedom of making it conditional; in fine, when, in supposing that the king even had more interest than the nation in the re-establishment of order and of credit, and in the discharge of the public debt, Necker dared to say to the deputies:—“No, *Gentlemen* (and it is good to impress it on your minds, that you may love still more your august monarch) no, it is not to the absolute necessity of a pecuniary supply that you owe the precious advantage of being assembled by his majesty in states-general.” And when he shewed them, article by article, that the greatest number of the means of providing for the exigencies of the state, and of supplying the deficit, would have been in the king’s hands without committing any injustice, and by simple retrenchments submitted to his authority and to his will, then those who, in their system of sovereignty, wished to make the king submit to the law of necessity, were offended that his minister should wish to enfranchise



him from it. They had been heard to say, that the nation ought to stone the man who would teach the king to be contented without new supplies.

Necker, it is true, wished to dissuade the assembly from the right which it thought it possessed of refusing its assistance; but, in making the king support the dignity of the crown, he left the nation all the means of containing his legitimate authority within the bounds of equity.

And, indeed, by a common accord between the monarch and the people, the expenditure being fixed, the taxes consented to, the ministers responsible, the statements of the receipt and expenditure published, laid before the nation, and verified by itself; in short, abuses reformed, and the administration of the finances submitted to rules of the exactest economy; what more could be desired? And if the equality of taxation was agreed to, and the return of the states-general regulated, the press as free as it could be, *lettres de cachet* abolished, or confided to the wisdom of a tribunal; if liberty, public and personal safety, property, equality of all citizens before the law, and under the law, were rendered inviolable; if all these benefits were not only offered but secured to the nation, what would have been wanting to complete the suprising success of this first assembly? Nothing but that character of independence and sovereignty, which the fanatic partisans of an absolute and despotic democracy wished to have in their decrees.

"In due time," said Necker to them, "his majesty will justly appreciate the character of your deliberations; and if it be such as he hopes, and such as he has a right to expect it will be, if it be such, in short, as the soundest part of the nation asks and wishes for, the king will second your intentions and your labours: he will glory in crowning them; and the spirit of the best of princes mixing, as it were, with that which the most faithful of nations will inspire, we shall see this happy accord give birth to the greatest of blessings, the most solid of empires."

It was this language of an authority that reserved to itself examination and free consent, it was this that wounded the pride of the democratic league. Jealous of seeing the sovereign exert his own pure will where they pretended to command, they accused Necker of presenting despotism under the forms of beneficence. They wanted a king who was no longer king.

However, in spite of Mirabeau, and the violent libel that he published, the speech of the king and that of the minister had, in the assembly, as well as among the public, the suffrages of all good men.

The most numerous concourse of the inhabitants of Paris had pressed in a crowd to Versailles, to enjoy the sight of the opening of the states. And when the king, at the head of the deputies of the nation, repaired after the sitting to the church of Saint Louis, the pomp, the order, the majesty of that august procession, the respectful silence of the crowd of spectators that lined the way; the king, in the midst of this national court, full of a sweet and credulous joy, and around him his family, happy

in the same enjoyment, all this, I say, together, made so lively and so deep an impression on the hearts of the surrounding multitude, that involuntary tears fell from every eye. Hope seemed to precede the march of the states-general, and prosperity to follow it. But, in the midst of this parade of patriotism and of concord, the dull and hollow murmur that precedes tempestuous dissensions fell indistinctly on the ear.

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## BOOK XV.

FIRST of all, a dispute arose between the three orders, as had been foreseen, on the manner of forming themselves. Their first resolution was, on the part of the third estate, never to deliberate by chambers, and, on the part of the nobility and clergy, never to deliberate by individual suffrage: a resolution which would at once have dissolved the convocation of the states, if both parties had stood firm and inflexible.

But the party of the first orders, already too feeble, weakened itself still more by taking an imprudent position. The third estate, in order to engage it to deliberate in common, began by demanding the verification of the powers of each deputy; and it was evidently right in requiring that this examination should be made together and in common: was it not requisite to recognize each other? What engagement would either party have formed by communicating the titles of its legation? Would not either have still been free after this examination? The first orders refused their assent to it. Instead of waiting for an opportune moment of taking a strong post, they thought they could dispute the ground foot to foot; and an indiscreet difficulty in the beginning was for them a false position, in which they could not defend themselves.

The motive of this conduct was the knowledge which the two first orders had of their deputation.

Among the nobles, a considerable number of ardent minds, animated, some by a spirit of liberty and independence, others by views and calculations of ambition, inclined toward the side of the people, where they hoped to be honoured, distinguished, and raised to the first employments. Among the clergy a still greater number, and, as I have said, the whole crowd of rectors were attached to the party of the commons by all kinds of ties. A rector is the most popular of men, if he be a good man. But a sentiment less laudable, although as natural, was first of all their aversion for the bishops, whose severity often importuned them, and then their hatred for that middle class of *abbés*, who were the object of their envy: a class which they said was wholly useless, and the only one that was favoured; indolent, and proud too of its indolence,

despising church ministry, and insulting the humble mediocrity, and sometimes even the poverty, of the hard condition of a pastor with all the arrogance of pompous opulence. It was this, above all, which alienated the low clergy, and forced them to range themselves with the order in which nature had placed them, and which beside did not neglect to promise them a gentler lot.

Now, so long as these members should be detained in their respective corps by example and withheld by shame, there was reason to think that they would remain attached to them; but, if, once in deliberation and fellowship with the third estate they saw themselves enveloped by the popular party, it was to be feared that they would unite wholly with it; and this first approach was what the nobles wished to avoid. But the only way of preventing desertion would have been to render it shameful and dishonourable in the public opinion, by displaying a character of frankness and loyalty that would have left no pretext for the baseness of deserters. Conciliatory commissioners were named by the three orders, and their conferences produced nothing.

A monarch, more occupied with himself than with the state, and who, jealous of his authority, would have seen that the states had met at least to restrain and to subjugate it, would have left the three orders to fatigue themselves with their debates and discord, to weary and dissolve this dangerous assembly; but the king, who sincerely wished for the public welfare, hoping to engage the orders to co-operate with him, feared nothing so much as to see them separate and dispute; and with the same good faith with which he had called them to his aid, he sought the means of conciliating them, pressing them, *with all his love*, to give them their consent.

The clergy accepted the king's mediation. The nobility, distrustful of the counsels of the minister, only consented to it under restrictions that were equivalent to a refusal. The third estate excused itself from replying to the king's offer, because the nobility, in modifying by certain reservations the acquiescence it appeared to give, the assent of that order no longer bore the character of conciliation. The order of the clergy felt its weakness; that of the nobility took its courage for force; the third estate was sensible of its own strength; it used it too, and abused it.

The resolution which it took almost unanimously on the tenth of June, was to terminate useless delays, to wait no longer, and to pass to action; not, however, till one last attempt should have been made, and fresh solicitations exerted to induce the clergy and the nobility to come and concur in the verification of the respective powers, advertising them at the same time that the commons would proceed on this examination as well in the absence as in the presence of the privileged classes. It was added that the commons would expose to the king the motives of this great resolution.

The name of *commons*, which the third estate had assumed, and the name of *classes*, which it gave to the two first orders, announced that it would acknowledge no distinction of rank between them and it; thus, for the nobility and the clergy there was no

expedient left, and no delay to obtain. It was requisite, either to join the third estate, as they have since done, or, after the verification of the respective powers made in common, to retire, each of the two orders into its chamber, constitute themselves integral parts of the states-general, make of their own accord the most generous sacrifices to the public welfare, declare themselves subject to taxation in the exactest equality, recognize the obligation of maintaining the national debt, and of providing for the exigencies of the state, to the people, ameliorate the condition of the inferior clergy, consecrate the principles of equality before the law, of property, of personal and public safety, and of toleration with respect to religious worship, profess too an inviolable attachment to the fundamental principles of the French monarchy, carry to the foot of the throne and signify to the third estate these solemn engagements, and demand above all the rest the deliberation by chambers, in reserving to the king the unalienable right of granting or of refusing his sanction to the decrees of the states; at the same time to protest against all the acts which should suppose them absent; declare null all those that should engage them without the concurrence of their suffrages, publish these resolutions; and, according to those of the commons, co-operate with them, or, if the third estate should refuse this co-operation, retire with the dignity suitable to men who would have fulfilled their task and done their duty freely. Their conduct, proclaimed in the provinces, would there have rendered odious the ambition of the third estate; particularly as the pulpit was still open to courageous truth, which might there have still resounded with success. This happy moment was lost.

The order of the nobility constituted itself, but kept on the defensive. That of the clergy thought it might preserve a feigned neutrality. "*It waited,*" said Tolendal, "*till there should be some conqueror, in order to choose its ally.*"

After this resolution of the 10th, the commons were occupied in verifying their powers. Having finished that operation, and determined that the work of national restoration might and ought to be begun without delay by the deputies present, it was resolved (June the 15th) to pursue it without interruption and without obstacle; but nevertheless, that if the absent deputies presented themselves during the course of the session that was about to open, the assembly would receive them with joy, and would be eager, after the verification of their powers, to share its labours with them. It was carefully added, that the national representation should be one and indivisible; and that it should belong only to representatives, legally verified and legitimately recognized, to concur in the expression of the national will.

It only remained to know what name the assembly should give itself. That of *The National Assembly*, the most ambitious of all, was that which it preferred (June the 17th); and those, who did not consent that the commons should usurp the title of *nation*, were inscribed on a list which was circulated about Paris: a form of denunciation that has since been mortal to the freedom of suffrage.

The second act of that omnipotence, which the commons attributed to themselves, was to declare null all contributions that had

existed till that time, and to lay down as a principle that even for the past, not only the tacit assent, but the formal consent of the nation had been requisite, in order to make the taxes legal.

From this moment it was the duty of the ministry to keep the king on his guard against the usurpation of authority, and to engage him to break up a factious assembly that exceeded the bounds of its functions, and arrogated to itself a power that it did not possess.

But the council, very far from being in a state to form a resolution, had not even a plan of conduct and of resistance. I have been told by one of the men, who, in this assembly have shewn most courage, knowledge and talent, I have been told by Malouet, that, having himself one day asked Necker, in the presence of the two other ministers, whether he had any plan of defence against the attacks with which the throne was menaced, Necker answered him that he had none. If that be the case, answered Malouet, all is over.

Necker was no more the minister that circumstances required. He had brought the state in a strait, and among rocks from which he was wholly unable to extricate it.

At the same time he could not conceal from the king that the assembly was arrogating to itself an exorbitant power; and it was to restrain this usurped authority that, on the twentieth of the month, a royal sitting was proclaimed for the twenty-second. Till then it was ordered that the halls should be shut, and that the states should not sit. A feeble expedient to prevent the union of a part of the clergy with the commons; for this union was threatened.

The court and the council were filled with agitation. The nobility and the high clergy saw their ruin approaching, if the king abandoned them; and they asked his support. It was therefore resolved in council that the king should go in person, to mark to the deputies of the people the limits of their power; to engage them to concord in the name of the state's welfare, and to manifest his own beneficent intentions to concur to that great end.

It required great prudence to draw up this declaration. There were two rocks which it was requisite to avoid, that of yielding to the commons, and that of exciting them to rebellion. Necker, being charged to prepare the declaration, endeavoured, according to his principles, to temper the character of authority without weakening it; to make the king wish for nothing that was not just and desirable, and to conciliate what belonged to the majesty of the monarch with what seemed to him to be due to the dignity of the representatives of the nation. His declaration was at first adopted; but, in his absence, and in a council that was held at Marly, some changes were made in it, trivial, as it is asserted, but such, as he himself has told me, that the declaration could no longer produce the effect which he had purposed.

Whatever the change might have been, which I have not been able to verify, it is certain that the speech wanted unity, and was ill calculated to attain its end.

On the twentieth, the order of the nobility had obtained an au-

dience of the king, in which its president, the Duke de Luxembourg, addressing his majesty, had said, "The deputies of the order of the third estate, sire, have thought that they could concenter in themselves alone the whole authority of the states-general. Without waiting for the concurrence of the two other orders, and the sanction of your majesty, they have thought that they could convert their decrees into laws. They have ordered them to be printed and sent into the provinces. They have declared null and illegal the taxes that actually exist. They have consented to them conditionally for the nation, but, in limiting their duration, they have thought without doubt that they could attribute to themselves the joint rights of the king and of the three orders. It is in the hands of your majesty that we depose our protests against such usurpations."

The nobility added the strongest assurances of zeal, of fidelity, of courage, and of obedience.

"I know," answered the king, "the rights attached to my birth; I will defend them; I will maintain, for the interest of all my subjects, the authority that is confided to me; and I will never suffer it to be impaired. I reckon on your zeal for the country, and on your attachment to my person; and I expect with confidence, from your fidelity, that you will adopt the projects of a conciliation with which I am occupied for the happiness of my people."

Both the speech and the answer supposed measures and means of which the government should be secure. This maxim was unfortunately forgotten: that the authority which exposes its own weakness does but hasten and complete its fall.

Till the royal sitting, the commons having no decent place in which they could assemble, took the first that offered. It was a tennis-court, now rendered famous by the oath which they took there never to be separated, and to assemble wherever circumstances should require it, till the constitution of the kingdom and the regeneration of order should be established and confirmed on a solid basis. The government was far from being on its guard against these vigorous acts.

The sitting announced for Monday the 22d having been postponed to the following day, the assembly transferred itself from the tennis-court to the church of Saint Lewis, in order, without doubt, that the sanctity of the place might give a more imposing character to what was going to pass there.

It was scarcely established there, when the doors of the sanctuary were opened, and the archbishops of Bordeaux and Vienne, and the bishops of Chartres and of Rhoder, entered and advanced in the midst of it, at the head of a hundred and forty-five deputies of the clergy. The commons received them with the joy of sacrificers to whom victims are led; and the people who filled the church seemed to wish, by their applauses, to make them insensible to the fate that awaited them. The body of the commons, increased by this reinforcement, redoubled its assurances and resolution for the sitting of the next day.

Necker did not think proper to accompany the king thither. I

sought, without approving it, to explain the motive of so strange a conduct. He had openly maintained, in the council, that the union of the three chambers in one only was inevitable; and that, by deferring it, the state would be exposed to the greatest danger; that all must perceive that the commons were irrevocably decided not to recognize the deliberation by orders, and that the authority of the king would be uselessly compromised by compelling them to it; that, if the resistance were the same on the part of the two first orders, the result of it would either be, that the states would be held without their concurrence, or that they would be dissolved; that the one would lead to the ruin of the clergy and of the nobility, and the other to that of the kingdom; that all resources were exhausted, and the fatal moment approaching, when the most urgent payments, those of the royal treasury, those of the town-hall, even the provisions of the troops, the subsistence of Paris, all were about to stop; that famine, bankruptcy, civil war, would threaten the kingdom, if the states were broken up, or were not very soon united; and, after having struck the king and the council with these alarming truths, he had induced them to adopt a declaration in which he had endeavoured to respect both the royal dignity and republican pride.

Now, it was this, above all, that had been changed in the declaration. The principle that would be most ardently contested was supposed incontestable; the king was there made to desire all that the notables wished, and to annul or prohibit all that displeased them. This was supposing, in him, both the actual power and the firm resolution of breaking up and dissolving the assembly, in case it should resist his authority. But the one was as unstable as the other. Bankruptcy and civil war were the two spectres that frightened the king.

Necker, therefore, having learned that his work was changed, and that the royal authority was opposed to public liberty, thought it his duty to abstain from appearing at this sitting, where his presence would have encouraged the belief that he adhered to what was done in spite of him. His conduct has induced some to say, that he had wished to attract singly the favour of the people; others, that he had given the signal for rebellion; and the most moderate that, solely occupied with his own fame, he had sacrificed every thing to his personal interest.

The declaration was read to the assembly in the king's presence; and it was not difficult to recognize in it two incoherent characters. It was divided into two parts. In the first, as I have said, the most absolute power was displayed. In the other, and in the train of those formulæ of despotism already too rigorously employed in the *lits de justice*, came to a touching exposition of the good intentions of the king, and of the measures that he wished to take to produce and to secure the prosperity of the kingdom; and after having called the states-general to co-operate with him in the great works of public utility, the king was desirous that all the laws, which he should have sanctioned in the present session of the states, might never be legally changed without the united consent of the three orders. With respect to the public

force alone, the protectress of order and of safety, whether at home or abroad, he expressly declared, that he would preserve entire and unblemished the institution of the army, as well as all authority of police, and of discipline over the soldier, such as the monarchs of France had constantly enjoyed.

If the states had been willing to owe to the king a limited and a mild monarchy, the king gave it them. But they did not think it worthy of them to be indebted to him for so temperate a change, and, whatever the new constitution might be, which they had not yet meditated, they understood that it should be their work, and not a donation from the king. Thus all the attention of the assembly was directed to that part of the declaration which recalled arbitrary power. The most mild and feeling sentiments that were added were considered only as a bait to lure obedience, and as a weak and vain palliative for acts of despotism that the king came to exercise.

The commons were above all wounded at this conclusion of the king, when, addressing them himself, he said :

" You have just heard, *Gentlemen*, the result of my dispositions, and of my views. They are consonant to the lively desire that I feel to promote the public welfare ; and if, by a fatality that is far from my thoughts, you should abandon me in so glorious an enterprise, singly I will insure the happiness of my people, singly I will consider myself as their true representative, and, knowing your instructions, knowing the perfect harmony that exists between the general will of the nation and my beneficent intentions, I shall feel all the confidence that so rare a concord ought to inspire, and I shall march toward the end I wish to attain with all the courage and firmness that I ought to possess. . . . Till now, it is I who do all for the welfare of my people, and it is an extraordinary circumstance, perhaps, that the sole ambition of a sovereign is to obtain the consent of his subject to accept his benefits."

This tone of authority, these words of *sovereign*, of *subjects*, of *benefits*, seemed offensive to republican ears ; and, when the king finished, by commanding the three orders to retire to their respective chambers, the tacit resolution of the commons was not to obey him. Thus all the fruit of the king's good-will was lost, and discord increased in a sitting that was destined to stifle it.

When the sitting was over, the commons, in a respectful but dark silence, suffered the order of the nobility to accompany the king, while they themselves remained in the hall, which from that moment was theirs. They were in vain ordered on the part of the king to quit it. There, instantly, and on the spot, it was resolved to persist in their proceedings and decisions ; this resolution was carried with one general voice. At the same time they decreed, that the persons of the deputies should be inviolable, that no one of them, for what he should have said or done in that assembly, could be prosecuted, arrested, or detained by the executive power, neither during nor after the session ; this decree declared the authors, instigators, or agents of such crimes, to be infamous and traitors to their country. It was added that, during the session,



the persons of the deputies should be secure from all criminal and even civil prosecution, unless the assembly annulled the exemption. This motion was made by Mirabeau, a man more interested than any other in placing a barrier between the laws and himself.

A numerous crowd of the people, sent from Paris to Versailles, had surrounded the hall of the states during the royal sitting. It still encompassed the assembly when it was informed that Necker was going to resign. This report was well founded.

The king, struck with astonishment at not seeing in his suite the minister of his finances, and still more surprised at not finding him in the palace on his return, had anxiously inquired of Montmorin whether Necker had determined to leave him; and Montmorin having hinted that he believed so, the king had charged him to go and tell Necker that he expected him.

It was at seven o'clock in the evening, at the moment when Necker was alone with the king, that the people thronged in crowds into the courts and interior of the palace, crying out that the king was deceived, and that the nation asked him to have Necker back again.

The conversation of the king with his minister lasted a whole hour. The people awaited the issue of it. At length the inhuman crowd saw the king go off to Trianon, without saluting him with that cry of *vive le roi*, which he so well deserved; and the instant afterward they saw Necker come down the staircase, and get into his chair. It was for him that vows and benedictions then burst forth. He has been charged with wishing to enjoy his triumph, and, had it been designed, it would have been truly insolent; but, although Necker might have returned modestly home by the galleries, without shewing himself to the people, there has, I think, been too much severity in imputing to him as a crime the want of this respectful attention for the king.

Necker, assailed by the gratitude and plaudits of the people, accompanied even to his house, which the same crowd invested, had no sooner arrived there than he saw hastening to him, not a deputation from the assembly, but the assembly entire, that, pressing eagerly round him, besought him, in the name of the country, in the name of the king himself, in the name of the state's safety, not to abandon them. This was only a stage trick, to render the royalist party odious; and the design of ruining the minister himself, if he were not devoted to the popular party, was at the same time formed in the council of the faction.

Necker wished to make them understand that, singly, he had no longer the power to effect any good. "We will aid you," cried Target, assuming the right of speaking in the name of all; "and for that purpose there are no efforts no sacrifices that we are not disposed to make."—"Sir," said Mirabeau to him, with the mask of frankness, "I do not like you; but I bow to virtue."—"Stay, M. Necker," cried the crowd, "we conjure you, stay."—The minister, tenderly affected, "Speak for me, M. Target," said he; "for I cannot speak for myself."—"Well, gentlemen, I will stay," cried Target; "this is M. Necker's answer." It has since been

known how sensibly the heart of the king was wounded by this scene; and this was intended by the actors.

There was no hope of breaking the union of the commons, nor of conquering their resistance. They every day received from the different cities of the kingdom bespoken felicitations on their courageous firmness. In these addresses it was said that, if snares should be laid around the national assembly, it had only to turn its head, and it would perceive behind it twenty-five millions of Frenchmen, who, with their eyes fixed on its decrees, awaited in silence the decision on their fate, and that of their posterity. It could not be expected that a party thus declared would either step back, or bend.

In the other party, resolution was far from being so unanimous, or resistance so firm. You have seen the division that took place in the order of the clergy. That of the nobility was scarcely more sure of itself; sixty deputies of this order had openly disavowed in their chamber the refusal that had been given to the king's mediation. On the side of the clergy, the day after the royal sitting, one hundred and sixty rectors had repaired to the common hall. Two days afterward, two more bishops, those of Orange and Autun had gone thither. On the same day the humble and mild archbishop of Paris had there presented his credentials. On the side of the nobility, forty-seven *gentilshommes*, and in that number some distinguished men, had joined the commons. The remainder of the two first orders could not delay to follow this example. And, in the critical state in which affairs then were, all delay was dangerous. The king, in order to induce their compliance, did what he should have done before the royal sitting. The letter which he addressed to them, by sparing them the humiliation of yielding to the commons, afforded them an opportunity of honouring themselves by a sentiment of love for him, and of respect for his will. It was to him that they yielded; and that day (the 27th of June) was marked by the re-union of the three orders in the common hall of the states-general.

This solemn meeting took place at first amidst a profound silence. But, when it was completed, this respectful silence was suddenly succeeded by an explosion of joy that quickly spread and communicated itself without.

The people, still susceptible of honourable and sweet emotions, had just learned that their triumph was the king's work; and doubly happy to obtain it and to owe it to him, pressed toward that palace; whither, a few days before, they had been borne by their fears. They now made it resound with the vow that is dearest and most grateful to Frenchmen. They wished to see the good king, and to shew him how he deserved to be loved, and to make him witness the transports he had caused.

The king appeared on the balcony of his apartment, the queen by his side; and both heard their names resound to the sky. Gentle tears mixed with their embraces, and, by an impulse at which all hearts were moved, the queen pressed in her arms the object of their gratitude. At that moment this people, that since have shewn themselves so cruel, and that were still essentially good (I

love to repeat it) seized the opportunity to recompence the queen for her feelings as a wife by gratifying those of a mother. They asked to see her son. They asked to see the dauphin. That precious and feeble child, borne in the arms of the queen, was presented by maternal love to national tenderness. Happy that he was not destined to live long enough to see what would be the changes of this deceitful favour.

*After the good king, the good minister*, cried the multitude; and with one common impulse, they rushed toward the treasury, which also soon resounded with vows and benedictions.

During the whole night, of this great day, Versailles was illuminated, and presented every where nothing but the picture of public felicity.

Nothing is more grateful than the sight of a nation strongly animated by generous feelings; but enthusiasm in the people is dangerous, even when it is most laudable; for the multitude knows no interval between extremes, and suffers itself to be borne from one excess to another, as the passion of the moment directs. It then felt all the value of liberty; but that recent liberty, with which it was intoxicated, soon depraved it, by fermenting in it the elements of every vice.

Already, under the specious name of public welfare, a spirit of licence, of faction and of anarchy was spread among the crowd. The independence and perpetuity of a national assembly, in which the commons should govern, and in that assembly the sovereignty of the people transmitted and concentrated in the will of its representatives with the character of the most frightful despotism; a constitution which would convert the kingdom into an armed democracy, under a shade of monarchy, governed in reality by an aristocratic corps periodically elective, but always elected to suit the reigning party; such was the project formed by the republican faction. This faction had well calculated the obstacles it had to encounter; and in the attacks which it would have to make, or to sustain, it foresaw that it would want a populace drunk with liberty, and mad with rage.

It was then that I comprehended what Chamfort had told me of the system of the factious to deliver the populace to the furies of discord, and keep it incessantly in convulsive agitation, either of alarm or of blind audacity.

To the vexation that troubles bring in a time of scarcity, to the dearness of bread, to the fear of famine, to that anxiety which the difficulty of procuring provisions might well excite, and which was carefully exaggerated, they added, in order to irritate the people, the blackest suppositions of plots invented against its liberties. They frightened them, in order to render them terrible, and they every day became more jealous and more wild with distrust and with suspicion.

The villains known by the name of *Marseillais*, called to Paris to be there the agents of the republican faction, wretches inured to rapine and carnage, and as greedy of blood as of booty, in mixing with the people diffused among them their own ferocity.

The presence of the courts of justice still withheld the populace, and took from it the audacity of crime; but all who observed its march expected every moment to see it overleap that feeble barrier; and the crowd of vagabonds, mixed with the factious, and ready to serve them, augmented every day: the wharfs, the quays were covered with them, the town-hall was invested by them; they seemed to assemble around it to insult the inaction of disarmed justice; twelve thousand of them were kept uselessly occupied in digging the hill of Montmartre, and paid at the rate of tenpence a day. They were posted there as a rear-guard, that the faction could advance at its will. In the night, a wild and threatening multitude assembled in the *Palais-Royal*. Its porticos were thronged, and the garden filled; a hundred groups were formed there to hear slanderous accusations and turbulent propositions. The most passionate declaimers were there the most popular. The crowd was there fed with a thousand calumnies that imposture invented and spread. It was there that seditious declaimers railed against the royal authority, and imputed to it as a crime the dearness of corn, and the poverty of the people. It was there that to the mutinous, intoxicated with mad hopes, or troubled with dark terrors, they pointed out the victims that they devoted to death. There no public men, not even the most honest and most respectable, were sure of being spared. It was from that palace that crowds issued, either terrified themselves, or paid to spread affright and sedition in Paris.

But that which exceeds probability is, that at Versailles itself, a people holding its whole existence from the court should shew itself most violently imbued with republican maxims.

Whilst a part of the clergy still deliberated on the union of the three orders, this very people had been seen to insult those who were said to oppose it, and to attack the good archbishop of Paris, and pursue him with stones to his carriage on false accusations. It had been observed that the French guards, far from curbing sedition, encouraged it by signs of connivance; and it was known that in Paris these soldiers, welcomed, caressed in the *Palais-Royal*, and treated in the coffee-houses, called themselves the friends of the people. The king, without feeling any anxiety for himself, might therefore wish that, in Paris and in Versailles, the people should be submitted to the usual police, and that, restored to order, they should peacefully return to their labours.

The king might think that a faction ever present and ever threatening did not leave the deliberations of the national assembly that freedom which ought to be their essence; that personal safety was the foundation of that freedom; that safety ought to be equally inviolable for all; and that the sovereign was its guarantee. He might think that the hall of the assembly, which was open like a theatre, ought not to be a rendezvous of sedition. He therefore found it at once just and prudent to order that freedom of opinion and personal safety should be protected by a respectful guard. At the same time he ordered that the

soldiers of the French guards, who were rambling about Paris, should be restored to discipline, and punished if they deviated from it.

But neither the people nor its leaders would suffer any constraint. The guard that surrounded the hall was forced; and the assembly sent a deputation to the king to declare, that the states, convoked free, could not act freely amid the troops that surrounded them. The guard was withdrawn: and it was requisite to leave the hall open to the crowds that flocked to it.

The king felt that the disorder would but continue to increase, if the people were left free from all fear; that it was no longer by concessions that the populace could be appeased; that at least, in using indulgence toward the factious, it was necessary to shew them that he could use rigour; and that, not being sure of obedience from the French guards, it was time to order some troops to advance, on which he could depend. He therefore marched some to his aid; but, first of all, in a very small number, and very sincerely with the sole intention of protecting public order and the tranquillity of the citizens. No one doubted it. But this tranquillity, this order itself, would have been a death blow to the revolution that the faction meditated.

The king had answered the nobility that he knew his birth-rights, and that he would maintain them. He had told the states-general that not one of their projects, that none of their resolutions could have the force of law without his special approbation, and that all the orders of the state might rely on his equitable impartiality. Now, in this system of authority and protecting power, and in opposition to a popular faction, which considered itself as the sole, absolute, and supreme legislative body, and as the depository of the national will, the king, in order to hold this language, should not be disarmed; and in case he should be forced to act as he had spoken, like a good king, but like a true monarch, it was necessary that he should have the power to do so. This was precisely what the mutinous and revolutionary party would not suffer. Its forces consisted in that mass of the people which blindly follows those who declare in its favour: and if Versailles were guarded, if Paris were calm or repressed by troops of the line, the faction would remain without means and without hope.

It was not yet to crimes that this party excited the people. It was still aware that anarchy had its dangers. But, in order to intimidate the king and honest men, were it at first to cost some ruin, even a little innocent blood, republican freedom was of such value, that some light sacrifices might well be made to it: such were the politics, and such the morality of the greater number; and they were the most moderate: the others thought every thing allowable that was useful to them; and at their head Mirabeau openly professed, as modern virtues, the contempt of the holiest duties, and most saintly rights.

It was requisite, they said, to nourish the fire of patriotism; and, in order to support it, the freedom granted to the press every

day spread slanderous libels, in which; whoever dared to dispute the power of the people to oppress, was devoted to public hatred, and to public vengeance. The noble who with warmth defended the cause of the nobles, a member of the clergy who with eloquence pleaded the cause of the clergy, was nothing less, in these accusations, than a traitors to the country. Even in the third class temperate opinion passed for cowardice, and rendered him who professed it suspicious. Thus, on the side of the commons, constraint and violence encompassed the two first orders, while the commons were they who seemed to repulse violence and constraint. All that could animate, irritate, and rouse the people was permitted and provoked; all that could curb and repress its passions excited in the states themselves the liveliest reclamations. They called liberty the right of extinguishing all liberty. The sense of these reclamations was not equivocal. We desire to effect every thing by means of the people, and that nothing may be effected but with us, and by us.

But, in convoking the states-general, had the king intended to form a democracy, and give to the commons that threatening despotism which they pretended to exercise? "Where, Sire?" said the oppressed orders to him, "where is now that security which you have guaranteed to us? Where is that equality which the commons have demanded? Would a shade of it exist for two orders, who would hear themselves denounced, devoted to the fury of the people, if they did not consent without reclamation to whatever the third class should desire? Without doubt, around the hall of this legislative assembly, there should have needed no military guard. But neither were troops of villains requisite, ready to stone and insult us." That peaceful guard, which was said to be offensive to the assembly of the states, was there only to secure the calm of debate, and the freedom of suffrage. Did the republican faction wish that all constraint should be banished from it? The troops then should have been withdrawn, and at the same time the multitude dispersed that came even into the assembly to encourage its partisans, choose and mark its victims, and render frightful to the weak the formidable trial of the *appel nominal*.

The orators of the people made perpetual eulogies on their goodness, and on their natural equity, and these eulogies were without doubt due to that class of citizens which is composed of the choicest of the people. But below that class, who did not recognize those villains, who in Paris had lately sacked the house of a peaceful and good citizen? And those who, in the gardens of the *Palais-Royal*, sowed calumny and breathed revolt? And those who at Versailles would stone a pious and charitable archbishop? And those who, having torn a parricide from death, had borne him away from punishment? And those who, since, in Paris, at the doors of the townhall, and at Versailles, even in the palace of the king, have committed so many atrocities? And those who have applauded them after having provoked them, and

have rejoiced to see the heads of all these so inhumanly misused carried about on pikes ?

It was then, said the two orders that claimed common safety, a most cruel derision, thus to confound the people that it was requisite to curb with that portion which ought to be protected. By a gross abuse of words, the populace was called the people, and this people the nation that was declared sovereign.

The police of Paris demanded a guard of citizens. But, till this guard was organized, what anxiety could the small number of troops excite which the king had marched there ? All was tranquil there since they arrived. But this military police did not suit the state of the commons. Their emissaries did not cease to agitate the *Palais-Royal*; that infamous resort of crime : thither they allured the soldiers of the guards, and kept them there all night. This is what the Duke du Châtelet, their colonel, could not permit : he ordered two of those vagabond soldiers to be arrested there at an undue hour : and they were led to the prison of the Abbaye. This was the signal for insurrection. The most common act of military authority was treated as a foul attack on liberty; and, in less than an hour, the prison where the two soldiers were confined (who were called the friends of the people) was besieged by twenty thousand men. The jailors having resisted, axes and levers were quickly procured, the doors were forced open, and all the prisoners, even the criminals, escaped during the night.

The next day, at the opening of the national assembly, the deputies of this mutinous crowd arrived at Versailles. In their address, which was delivered to the president, it was said that those two unhappy victims of despotism had been torn from their irons ; that amid loud acclamations they had been brought back to the *Palais-Royal*, where they were under the guard of the people; that had rendered itself responsible for them. " We await," added they, " your answer, to restore calm to our fellow-citizens and freedom to our brothers."

The president's answer was, that, by invoking the king's clemency, the assembly would give an example of that respect which was due to the royal authority, and that it conjured the inhabitants of Paris to revert instantly to peace and order. This feeble answer was at least sincere and conformable to the will of the commons ; for the assembly did not know that the populace was urged to rebel by the most distinguished and most infamous villains, and that the madness, which they infused, was employed by these leaders to inspire the court with a dread of insurrection. The assembly itself was put in action by springs that were unknown to it. In its name, and by its authority, the revolutionary faction agitated the people, and by them this same faction governed the assembly. Such has been the mechanism of the revolution.

The king was intreated by them, in the name of the assembly, to be pleased to employ, for the re-establishment of order, those infallible means of clemency and goodness, so natural to his heart ; and he consented without pain. But before he yielded to an im-

pulse of kindness, he wished that order should be re-established. This was by no means done. The people, without recommitting the two soldiers to their prison, without renouncing its turbulent nocturnal meetings, and in redoubling, on the contrary, both its wildness and its violence, demanded the king's promise in a tone that would suffer no delay, and discipline and royal authority were obliged to bend to its will.

It was then that the decisions of the council appeared to assume some energy ; but weakness never wholly quitted its character ; it tottered when it attempted to rise, and fell back again more timid, after a useless effort.

The adventure of the two soldiers of the guards, the spirit of insubordination with which the people inspired them, the audacity of this people, the tone it had assumed, this way of commanding by supplication, this ardent impatience to obtain what it asked, and the praises that were bestowed on it for allaying its passion after it had been obeyed, in fine, that character of imperious and threatening liberty which it announced on every occasion, had been forcibly seized in the council, as means to persuade the king that the greatest of evils, both for the state and for himself, would be to suffer the authority which he held in his hands to be despised, and that it would infallibly be despised if it were seen disarmed ; that the people had already dared to attack it, because it had shewn itself weak, and that some formidable force could alone insure it respect, and command obedience ; that the multitude must tremble, or it would make all tremble ; that it was not only by laws that states were governed, particularly states so vast ; that justice wanted the sword and the buckler ; that prudence and equity consisted in knowing how to use force without ever abusing it ; that it was this prudence which distinguished good kings from feeble kings, and from tyrants : that it would have been desirable, without doubt, that the session of the states should have passed in complete security, without having around them any display of military force ; that it would be the same in France as soon as order and tranquillity should be re-established ; but that so long as the people, and the most violent and seditious class of the people, should come to mix insult and menace with the deliberations of the states-general, public force had a right to arm itself, in order to repress it.

"There are those, Sire," added they, who demanded the exercise of a restraining power, "who think they can appease the populace as easily as they irritate it; after they shall have made it serve their purpose of subverting the whole kingdom, they will want to bring the tiger back to his cage, and to make him forget how terrible he is in his rage ; it will be too late : the ferocious beast will have felt his own force, and the weakness of his chains. Above all, what will he be, if he has tasted blood ? He will long make those tremble who shall have dared to unchain him. Teach this people, then, that in your hands it has still justice to dread.



“ From the beginning of your reign, Sire, you have been persuaded to reduce and to weaken your military establishment; and you who flattered yourself that you would have only to reign over a faithful and good people, you have consented, in the recititude of your heart, to this fatal reduction; but discipline and obedience are not extinguished in your armies; and you have still force enough left to oppose to the audacity of these conspirators. It would be despotism to use these forces against the law; but, employed in the maintenance of order and of the laws, they are the worthy retinue of legitimate authority, the safeguard of the state, and the support of royalty.

“ If the members of the national assembly had all your loyalty, Sire, they would all unite to demand around the sanctuary of legislation some impenetrable barrier, inaccessible to the troops on one side, and to the people on the other; and then all would be equal. But no, it is in order to leave to this populace full licence and complete impunity that they wish the troops to be withdrawn. They fear lest it should be cooled and intimidated; they wish that it should dare every thing, and fear nothing; it is by the people that they seek to reign. Have we not seen that, from the centre to the extremities of the kingdom, the name of liberty, that name which, for the populace, means only licence, has resounded like a general signal of insurrection and anarchy? Police among the people, discipline in the armies, and throughout the country the laws of order, have been denounced as the remains of slavery. Independence and contempt for every species of authority; this is what the face of the kingdom presents; and it is on the ruins of the monarchy and with its wrecks that the revolutionary faction boasts of creating a democratic empire. It is a vile mass of vagabonds without morals, without employment, without home, that is called the sovereign people. But the nation desires and demands that the constitution of the kingdom may be regulated and fixed on a fundamental basis; and it should at once be rendered more regular and more stable. It is to this end, Sire, that the states are charged to co-operate with you. By the ancient and venerable constitution of the monarchy, you are king: the supreme authority, the executive force has been delivered into your hands: your ancestors, to whom the nation confided it, have transmitted it to you as your inheritance. The nation neither wishes nor means to despoil, to depose, or disinherit its king. And what would a monarch be, if he were not the protector of the rights and liberties of all?

“ Protect, Sire, those of every order, and suffer none to be oppressed. Protect those of the states themselves; and protect, above all, in the cities, in the villages, those of the honest citizens and peaceful labourers who, threatened in their calm retreat by an idle and wandering populace, tremble lest it should soon be too late to check it with the curb of the laws. No, Sire, it is no longer in the name of the clergy or of the nobility, it is in the name of a good people, of which you are the father, that we conjure you not to abandon it to the most

cruel of tyrannies, to that of the populace and of its perfidious leaders."

Thus the king was persuaded that, in displaying to the people a military power, he should only repress and subject force by force, and should leave public liberty protected and uninjured.

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## BOOK XVI.

THE king then ordered some troops to advance; but, in forming a vigorous resolution, the ministers should have foreseen its consequences, calculated step by step the forces and resistance, the difficulties and the dangers, and determined beforehand their march and their positions as events might direct. They calculated nothing, they provided for nothing, they did not even think of securing the troops from the corruption of the populace of Paris. They took no precaution to shelter the king and his family from insult, in case of revolt; and in the fauxbourgs of Paris, the only imposing post, the Bastille, was neither furnished with a sufficient garrison, nor with provisions to nourish the few soldiers who were there. In short, the very maintenance of the troops, that were assembled, was neglected to such a degree, that their bread was made with damaged corn, while the women of the populace came to offer them some most excellent, with wine and meat in abundance, without reckoning their other means of debauchery and corruption.

To this species of stupor, into which the court and the council had fallen, the adverse party opposed a regular, progressive, and constant march, proceeding from post to post towards dominion, without ever losing a moment or retreating a step. Resolved then to suffer no collection of troops either around Paris or Versailles, this party determined on an address to the king (the 8th of July, 1789). It was the work of Mirabeau, the principal orator of the commons, a man endowed by nature with all the talents of a tribune; violent and ardent in his disposition, but as supple in his conduct as wild in his passions; most ingenious in anticipating the reigning opinion, and diligent in preceding it, in order that he might appear to lead it; a coward at heart, but strong in intellect and bold in impudence; corrupted to excess, and glorying in corruption; dishonoured from his early youth by the most shameful vices, but attaching no value to honour; well calculating that a dangerous man could not be despised even by rendering himself despicable, and resolved to be indifferent to the esteem which morality commands, provided he obtained that which great talents, when formidable, will seize on and usurp.

The following is the address to the king which he proposed; a master-piece of crafty and perfidious eloquence, and which, applauded as might be expected, was adopted by acclamation (July the 9th.)

"Sire, you have invited the national assembly to manifest to you its confidence; this was to anticipate the dearest of its wishes. We come to depose in the bosom of your majesty the liveliest alarms. Were we their object, had we the weakness to fear for ourselves, your benevolence would deign again to hearten us; and though you might blame us for having doubted your intentions, you would listen to our anxious complaint, would dissipate its cause, and leave no uncertainty on the situation of the national assembly.

"But, sire, we do not implore your protection; that would be offending your justice. We have conceived some fears, and we dare assert that they are intimately allied to the purest patriotism, to the interest of our constituents, to public tranquillity, and to the happiness of the beloved monarch, who, in smoothing for us the road to happiness, well deserves to walk in it himself unimpeded and undisturbed. (Detestable hypocrite!)

"In the emotions of your own heart, sire, lies the true safety of the French nation. While troops are advancing from every side, while camps are forming around us, and the capital invested, we ask each other with astonishment, does the king suspect the fidelity of his people? Could he have doubted it, would he not have frankly declared to us his paternal solicitude? What mean these threatening preparations?

"Where are the enemies of the state and of the king, whom it is requisite to subjugate? Where are the conspirators that it is requisite to reduce? One unanimous voice answers in the capital, and through the whole extent of the kingdom: we cherish our king; we praise heaven for the gift with which it has blessed us in his love.

"Sire, the religion of your majesty could only be surprised under the pretext of public good. If they who have given this counsel to our king had confidence enough in their principles to expose them to us, that moment would bring with it the finest triumph of truth.

"The state has nothing to fear but from bad principles that dare besiege the throne itself, and do not respect the crown of the purest and most virtuous of princes. And how do your counsellors manage, to make you doubt of the attachment and love of your subjects?

"Have you lavished their blood? are you cruel, implacable have you abused justice? does the nation impute its misfortunes to you? does it name you in its calamities; can they have told you that the nation is impatient under your yoke? no, no, they have not done so. Calumny is at least not absurd: it seeks for some little probability in order to colour its atrocities.

"You have recently seen, sire, all your power over your people. Subordination has settled in the agitated capital, the prisoners, set at liberty by the people, have of themselves resumed their chains; and public order, which perhaps would have cost torrents

of blood, if force had been employed, has been re-established by a word from your mouth; but that word was a word of peace; it was the expression of your heart, and your subjects glory in never resisting it. How noble is it to exercise this empire! it is that of Lewis IX, of Lewis XII, of Henry IV; it is the only one that is worthy of you. We should deceive you, sire, did we not add, compelled by circumstances, this empire is the only one that it is now possible to exercise in France. France will not suffer the best of kings to be abused and perverted, by sinister means, from the noble plan which he himself has traced. You assemble us to fix the constitution in concert with you, in order to work the regeneration of the kingdom. The national assembly has just solemnly declared to you that your wishes shall be fulfilled, that your promises shall not be vain, that neither snares, nor difficulties, nor terrors, shall ever retard its march, or intimidate its courage.

"Our enemies will affect to say, where then is the danger of the troops? and what mean their complaints, since they are inaccessible to discouragement? The danger, sire, is urgent and universal; it is beyond all the calculations of human prudence.

"The danger is for the people of the provinces; once alarmed for our liberty, we know no power that can curb them. Distance alone magnifies and exaggerates every thing; it doubles, sours, and envenoms inquietude. The danger is for the capital. With what eye will the people, in the bosom of indigence, and tormented by the most cruel anguish, see its scanty pittance disputed by a crowd of threatening soldiers. The presence of the troops will excite, will produce a universal fermentation; and the first act of violence, committed under the pretext of police, may begin a long and dreadful train of evils.

"The danger is for the troops. French soldiers, brought near the center of political discussions, sharing the passions as well as the interests of the people, will perhaps forget that an engagement has made them soldiers, in order to remember that nature made them men.

"The danger, sire, threatens the labours that are our first duty, and which will only completely succeed, and acquire true consistence and permanency, in as much as the people shall consider them as wholly free. There is besides a contagion in the violence of passion. We are but men: distrust of ourselves, the fear of appearing weak, may hurry us beyond the boundary of prudence. Besides, we shall be beset with violent and unmeasured counsels; and calm reason, and tranquil wisdom give no oracles amid tumult, disorder, and faction. The danger, sire, is yet more terrible; and judge of its extent by the alarms that bring us to you. Great revolutions have had causes much less signal. More than one enterprise fatal to nations has announced itself in a less sinister and a less formidable manner.

"Do not believe those who talk lightly to you of the nation, and who can only represent it to you as their views may guide them: now insolent, rebellious, seditious; now submissive, docile to the yoke, and prompt to bow its head to receive it. These two pictures are equally faithless. Always ready to obey you, sire, be-

cause you command in the name of the laws, our fidelity is without bounds, as without spot. Ready to resist all the arbitrary commands of those who abuse your name, because they are enemies of the laws, our fidelity itself prescribes this resistance, and we will always glory in deserving the reproof which our firmness may attract.

“Sire, we conjure you in the name of the country, in the name of your own happiness and glory, send back your soldiers to the posts from which your counsellors have drawn them; send back this artillery that is destined to cover your frontiers; send back, above all, those foreign troops, the allies of the nation that we pay to defend us, and not disturb our tranquillity; your majesty has no need of them. And why should a king, adored by twenty millions of Frenchman, seek at a great expense to collect around his throne a few thousands of foreigners? In the midst of your children, sire, be guarded by their love. The deputies of the nation are called to consecrate with you the eminent rights of royalty on the immutable basis of the liberty of the people. But while they are fulfilling their duty, while they are yielding to reason and to sentiment, would you expose them to the suspicion of having yielded only to fear? Ah! the authority which all hearts freely give to you is alone pure and immutable; it is the just return for your benefits, and the immortal appendage of the princes of whom you are the model.”

This speech, so insolently flattering, this eloquent menace of a general insurrection, if the king, for the safety of the good and for the terror of the wicked, kept a part of his armies near him, if he did not abandon his capital to all the excesses of licence and of robbery, and the national assembly to the insults and threats of an insurgent populace; this affectation of including mutinous and revolted vagabonds in the praises of a good people; this arrogant caution that the king's welfare depended on his submission and compliance, and the formal declaration that this was the only power he would henceforth be able to exercise, did not produce that effect on the mind of the king which the party expected. Through these respectful threats and hypocritical alarms, he saw too well that the real question was, whether he should abandon or maintain his legitimate authority; and that he was only exhorted to suffer himself to be disarmed and bound: he saw, above all, that, in touching lightly on his good intentions, those facts were carefully omitted which rendered just and necessary the precautions he had taken. It was therefore requisite that he should explain himself; and to this language, full of artifice, he answered by reasons full of force and of candour.

“No one,” said he to the deputies, “is ignorant of the tumultuous and scandalous scenes that have passed and been renewed at Paris and at Versailles, under my own eyes and under the eyes of the states-general. It is necessary that I should make use of the means that are in my power, in order to restore and maintain order in the capital and in the neighbourhood. To watch over the public safety is one of my principal duties. These are the motives which have engaged me to collect some troops around

Paris. You may assure the states-general that they are only destined to repress, or rather to prevent, a repetition of these tumults, to maintain the exercise of the laws, to secure and protect the liberty that should reign in your deliberations. Every species of constraint should be banished from them, and all apprehension of disorder or violence removed. None but evil-minded men could mislead my people on the true motives of the precautions I am taking. I have constantly studied to do all that could contribute to my people's happiness, and I have always had reason to feel secure of its fidelity and love.

"If, however, the necessary presence of the troops in the neighbourhood of Paris still causes any umbrage, I shall be willing, on the demand of the assembly, to transfer the states-general to Noyon, or to Soissons, and I would then repair to Compiègne.

This is what he was very sure that they would not ask. Nothing was more contrary to the plan they had formed than to separate themselves from the people of Paris. It was therefore more than useless to manifest his consent to it; and if, by fresh disturbances, the king were forced to this removal, why did he not command it? Why did he not repair to Compiègne with his household and a respectable guard, declaring null and contrary to the right of safety and to the freedom of suffrage every resolution formed amid the trouble that agitated Versailles and Paris?

The popular party was careful not to quit its post. It needed the support of the populace; it was by agitating the mob that it rendered itself potent and formidable. It answered therefore, by its organ, Mirabeau, that "it belonged to the troops to remove from the assembly, and not to the assembly to remove from the troops. We have petitioned," said he, "for the removal of the army, and not of ourselves."

From that moment at least it was very evident that it was by the people that the commons intended to act; and in this struggle for sway, that was going to begin, they wanted to have all their own forces and leave the king none.

It was just however that the king should preserve at least a power of resistance. In the most temperate monarchies, the king has the right of the veto; and the necessity of the royal sanction, in order to give to the decrees of the deputies of the people the form and force of laws, has never been doubted. Indeed, as the depositary of the executive power, the king had a right to examine the laws for whose execution he was to provide; and in his quality of first representative of the nation, he was constituted the inspector of the rest. In the tumult and shock of the diverse passions and opposite interests that might divide a political assembly, it was often to be feared that the most prudent and most useful decisions would not result from intemperate discussion. One single voice above numerical equality might convert an unjust and violent decree into law. Whenever passionate eloquence and sound reason should be at variance, there was very little safety for the best and most equitable party. The king, in legislation, was therefore a moderator, a necessary regulator; it

was therefore neither in the will of the king alone, nor in that of the deputies of the people, that the plenitude of legislative power ought to reside, but in the accord of these two wills; and the consent of one to the resolutions of the other formed this royal sanction.

Now, if this right of examining and sanctioning the laws, of giving to them his consent, or of interposing his veto, were unacknowledged, contested, refused; if the monarch saw his legitimate authority half ravished from him; if he beheld his throne shaken, his crown despised, the sceptre of his fathers ready to break in his hands, ought he not to arm to defend them? would it not be just, even in the eyes of the nation, that he should teach the commons to confine themselves within the bounds marked out to them in the instructions they received from their constituents?

These questions were agitated in the council, and alarmed the ministers.

"Every act of rigour," said they, "would be a step equally fatal, whether it should be requisite to support or to abandon it; it would be an hostility contrary to the feelings of the king, which might light up between his people and him the fires of civil war, and render odious the very power that it should have rendered formidable, or which would be disgraced if it suffered itself to be braved."

Placed between two rocks, in a strait where either the royal authority or what was called public liberty was hastening to its end, having neither sufficient credit nor sufficient influence to save both, they employed with the king all the means of dissuasion which his esteem and their zeal afforded them: they shewed him only imprudence and peril in their assembling discontented and corruptible troops, of which he thought himself secure. But, were they more firm in the will to obey, who could assert that their approach would suffice to re-establish order and calm? and if this attempt to intimidate the people should fail in its aim, if the people, instead of being withheld, should be still more irritated by it, what expedient would then be found to command obedience or appease rebellion? They saw, at the head of the popular party, men of an obstinate temper; they saw there too some crafty knaves deep in the art of dissembling; but they still thought well of the national character; they reckoned on a great number of honest men in the commons; and the example of the king, his moderation, his loyalty, his generous indulgence, might cause sentiments to prevail there analogous to his own. Their hope was the same as that of Lally-Tolendal, when, addressing the noblemen of his bailiwick, he said to them: *They deceive you, noble citizens, who tell you that the third estate has implored justice only to be unjust, and that it has only wanted to cease to be oppressed in order to become the oppressor.* This excellent young man soon recognized the illusion he had indulged; but what he hoped sincerely, Necker, Montmorin, La Luzerne, Saint-Priest, all hoped for too. Thus, equally faithful to the state and to the king, the road of conciliation seemed to them to be alone practicable: for

that of corruption was ever unwelcome to them, and the king would not have taken it.

You may conceive what must have been the perplexity of this prince. But every thing warned him that it was time to adopt a system of firm conduct, and this new system required new ministers.

The dismissal of the present ones was resolved on, upon the eleventh of July.

On the morning of the 12th the news had reached Paris ; but it was not made public till the evening at the theatres. A sullen indignation then seized on the public mind. It was concluded, that the resolution of acting with open force had been formed at court without the knowledge of the king, and that the enemies of the people, by removing sage and moderate men from his councils, were determined, in spite of his resistance, to draw him to their purpose. The dismissal of Necker, above all, in the critical state in which the kingdom was, appeared to be a proof that they wanted to ruin and to starve Paris. At every theatre the performance was instantly interrupted. Men, wild with alarm, came and cried out to the actors : *Leave off, withdraw, the kingdom is in mourning. Paris is threatened, our enemies prevail. Necker is no longer in place, he is dismissed, he is gone, and with him are dismissed all the ministers who were the friends of the people.*

A sudden affright is spread throughout the theatres, the actors disappear, the spectators retire trembling and dismayed ; and the resolution is already formed, through the whole city, to demand that Necker, and all the good ministers who think like him, may be restored to the state.

In every place, where parties of the people usually assemble on festivals, the fermentation was extreme. The *Palais-Royal* was filled with a tumultuous crowd, agitated like the waves of the sea in a violent storm. At first a sad and long murmur dwelt on the ear, and soon a threatening rumour spread more fearfully. The people took the green cockade ; leaves of trees were substituted for it ; and, as a signal for insurrection, the populace having entered the shop of a maker of wax models, took the busts of Necker and the Duke d'Orleans, and carried them about Paris.

Another crowd assembled in the square of Louis XV, and the tumult continued to increase. To dissipate it, some troops were ordered to advance. Their commander, the Baron de Bezenval, had repaired thither with a company of grenadiers of the Swiss guards. The Prince de Lambesc came and joined him at the head of fifty dragoons of the Royal-German. The presence of the troops completed the irritation of the people. All began to insult them. The troops were careless of these clamours ; but, assailed with stones, by which some of them were wounded, the dragoons were losing all patience, when Bezenval gave orders to the Prince de Lambesc to advance, in order to force the people to fall back into the Tuileries. This order was executed with so much caution, that not a man of the people was either beaten down or bruised. It was not till the moment when the dragoons



were retired, that a madman, who obstinately persisted in shutting the Pont-Tournant against the prince, was slightly wounded by him.

Throughout Paris the report was instantly spread of a massacre of the citizens in the garden of the Tuileries, where, it was said, the dragoons of Lambesc were riding in among the crowd, with drawn swords, and the colonel at their head, murdering old men, crushing children, beating down pregnant women, or making them miscarry with affright.

At the same time, on the false report that their regiment was insulted, the grenadiers of the French guards forced the Duke du Châtelet, their colonel, to let them escape from the garden of the hotel de Richelieu, where he kept them confined. From that time the regiment of guards was entirely devoted to the people; and that was what the factious most ardently desired.

Thus Paris, without courts of justice, without police, without a guard, at the mercy of one hundred thousand men wandering wildly in the middle of the night, and for the most part wanting bread, believed itself on the point of being besieged from without, and pillaged from within. Twenty-five thousand soldiers were posted round its walls, at Saint Dennis, at Courbevoys, at Charenton, at Sèvres, at La Muette, in the Champ de Mars; and while they should blockade it, and cut off all supplies of provisions, it would be a prey to a starving people. Such was the terrible picture which, in the night between the 12th and 13th of July, was present to every fancy.

But the insurgents themselves, seized with the common terror, committed no pillage. The armourers' shops were the only ones they forced, and they there took only arms. As soon as it was day, the city was filled with a tumultuous populace, that, knocking at every door, asked with loud cries for arms and bread, and that, believing there was a magazine of muskets and swords under the town-hall, flocked thither, in order to force it. I stop to explain by whom the town-hall was at that moment occupied, and by what species of tribunal the police was there exercised.

On the 10th of May, the elections of the city being completed, Target, the president of the assembly of the electors, persuaded them to sit permanently during the session of the states-general. A resolution was taken to that effect, with the consent and liking of the popular faction. Thus, when, at the end of June, after the royal sitting, the electors found their hall shut at the archbishop's palace, they procured admittance into the town-hall, and established themselves there as the agents of the national assembly to the people of Paris.

I ought to render them this testimony, that, in circumstances of difficulty and danger, charged with the care of the public safety, they acquitted themselves in their functions like good and brave citizens.

It was to this assembly, then, that, on the 13th of July, the assembled crowds addressed themselves to ask for arms, of which, they said, there were abundance in the vaults of the hall. But as this magazine did not exist, the people forced the doors in vain,

the muskets of the guard were all that were found there, and they were carried off.

In the mean time the alarm bell was rung in every church, and the districts assembled to decide on the means of providing for the safety of the city both within and without; for it was not less urgent to defend it against the villains with which it swarmed, than against the troops that encircled it. From this moment the citizens formed bands of volunteers, who came and drew up by common consent in the squares and public gardens. But arms were still wanted, and still incessantly demanded at the town-hall. The mayor, the unfortunate Flesselles, is sent for; he arrives there through the crowd, calls himself the father of the people, and is applauded on that very spot where to-morrow his bleeding body will be dragged and torn.

The electors appoint a permanent committee at the town-hall, to be there accessible night and day to this people so tortured with affright. Flesselles, at the head of the committee, imprudently announces that he expects ten thousand muskets from Charleville, and thirty thousand soon afterward. He had even, as it is said, the fatal levity to trifle with the most impatient, by sending them to places where he made them believe they would find arms. They hastened to the search, saw they were deceived, and returned to denounce him to the people as an impostor, who, in betraying, insulted them.

The committee of the electors, in order to encourage the people, resolved that a Parisian army should be immediately formed, to the number of forty-eight thousand men. All the districts came to offer themselves to compose it on the same day. The green cockade was laid aside, and the red and blue took its place (green was the colour of a prince who was not a republican.)

In the mean time the people had gone to the *garde-meuble*, and had carried away the valuable arms that were preserved there as curiosities, either for the beauty of the workmanship with which they were enriched, or for their antiquity, and out of respect for the heroes whose glory they recalled. The sword of Henry the Fourth became the booty of a vagabond.

But for so many thousand men this small number of arms was a feeble resource. They returned furious to the town-hall, still demanding arms, saying that there were some, and accusing the electors of conniving with the enemies of the people, in order to leave Paris without defence. Pressed by these reproaches, which were accompanied by threats, the committee conceived the idea of authorizing all the districts to get pikes and other arms of that kind made, and the people were satisfied.

But a better expedient, which the districts themselves conceived and adopted, was to send, in the evening, to *les Invalides*, and summon the governor, Sombreuil, to deliver to them the arms which they knew were deposited in the hôtel. The commander-general of the troops, who had a camp very near there, and to whom Sombreuil addressed them, demanded time to send to Versailles for the king's orders; and that time was granted him.

The terror of the following night assumed a different and more gloomy character; the gates of the city were shut and guarded; patrols, already formed, kept the vagabonds in awe. Fires kindled in the streets lighted fear, intimidated crime, and shewed every where parties of the people wandering like spectres. This vast and dismal silence was only broken by the stifled and terrible voice of those who, from door to door, cried out, *arms and bread!*

In the Fauxbourg Saint Laurent, the house of the monks of Saint Lazare was set on fire and sacked. The incendiaries expected to find there a magazine of corn.

In the mean time the *Palais-Royal* was full of those mercenary conspirators, who were employed to stir up the fire of sedition; and the night passed there in accusations, and in atrocious motions, not only against Flesselles, but against the committee of the electors, who were denounced as traitors to the country.

On the day before, five thousand weight of powder, which was leaving Paris, had been seized at the gates, and deposited at the town-hall, under the chamber of the electors. In the middle of the night, the few persons who remain on watch in this chamber, are advertised that, from the side of the Fauxbourg Saint Antoine, fifteen thousand men, the confidential band of the leaders of the *Palais-Royal*, are coming to force the town-hall. Among the number on watch was a citizen, Le Grand de Saint René, a man of a feeble and sickly constitution, but of a strong and firm courage. "Let them come and attack us," said he, "we'll be blown up together." He immediately ordered the guards of the hall to bring six barrels of powder into the adjoining room. His resolution was known. The first barrel that was brought made the most intrepid turn pale, and the people withdrew. Thus, by one single man the town-hall was preserved. The kingdom, too, would have been saved in the same manner, if the king had had such men at the head of his councils and his camps. But he himself recommended to all to spare the people, and he never could consent to any act of vigour and severity against his subjects; a virtuous weakness, that has brought his head under the axe of the executioner.

During this frightful night, the citizens kept themselves locked in their houses, each trembling at home, for himself and for those that were dearest to him. But on the 14th, in the morning, these personal fears yielding to public alarm, the whole city was but one and the same people: Paris had an army; this army, spontaneously assembled in haste, was yet ill acquainted with the rules of discipline; but public spirit supplied them. Single, it commanded every thing like an invisible power. What gave this great character to public spirit, was the address that had been employed to fascinate opinion. The best citizens, seeing in the troops that came to protect Paris only enemies who would bear fire and sword within its walls, all imagined that they had to combat for their homes, for their wives and their children. The necessity, peril, the care of the common safety and defence, the resolution of perishing, or of saving what they had most dear on earth, alone

occupied every soul; and formed of all tempers and all wills, that surprising accord which, of an immense and violently agitated city, made an army obedient to the intention of all, without receiving an order from any one; so that every one could at once obey, where no one commanded.

Fire-arms and powder were still wanting to this army; and the committee of the city, having protested anew that none had been found even at the arsenal, the people returned to *les Invalides*. The order that Sombreuil expected from Versailles did not arrive. The people prepared to employ force: and such was the irresolution of the court, or rather such was the repugnance of the king to every species of violence, that in the Champ-de-Mars, at a few paces from the hôtel which they came to force open, the troops received no orders to defend it. Without choosing to yield any thing, the government abandoned every thing; a sure way of losing all with disgrace.

It was then under the eyes of six Swiss battalions, and of eight hundred horse, as well dragoons as hussars, all motionless in their camp, that the *Hôtel des Invalides* was opened to the people; a very positive proof, as Bezenval has since affirmed it to be, that the troops were forbidden to fire on the citizens; and here was the great advantage of the people, that the king would only suffer them to be curbed, without ever consenting that they should either be treated as enemies or as rebels. This same order was observed throughout Paris, at the barriers, on the ramparts, in the square of Lewis XV. This, too, was what, in every post around, rendered the troops accessible to corruption, by the facility with which they were allowed to mix with the people.

This people, men and women, accosted the soldier, and with glasses in their hands, presented to him the lures of joyous licentiousness. "What!" said they to him, "do you come to make war upon us? Do you come to spill our blood? Would you have the courage to draw your sword against your brothers, to fire upon your friends? Are you not Frenchmen and citizens like ourselves? Are you not, like us, the children of the people that ask only to be free, and to be no longer oppressed? You serve the king, you love him; and we too love our good king; and we are ready to serve him. He is not the enemy of his people; but he is deceived, and you are commanded, in his name, to do what he does not approve. You serve, not him, but that unjust nobility, that nobility that dishonours you by treating you like slaves. Come, brave soldiers, come and revenge yourselves for a servitude that disgraces you. *The king and liberty! down with the aristocrats, our oppressors and your tyrants!*"

The soldier, naturally the friend of the people, was not deaf to this language. He saw but one step to take from poverty to abundance, from constraint to liberty. A great number deserted, and, so near Paris, it was impossible that they should not be corrupted.

The people then, in the presence of the troops of the Champ-de-Mars, ransacked with full licence the *hôtel des Invalides*. Twenty-eight thousand muskets were found there in the vaults of the

dome; and with this booty, and the cannon of the esplanade drawn through Paris in triumph, the conquerors returned to the town-hall. There they learned that the governor of the bastille, the Marquis de Launay, summoned in his turn to furnish arms and ammunition, had answered that he had none. A general cry was instantly heard from every corner of the square: *Let's go and attack the bastille.*

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## BOOK XVII.

THIS resolution appeared to be sudden and unexpected among the people. But it was premeditated in the council of the chiefs of the revolution. The bastille, as a state prison, had always been odious, on account of the iniquitous use to which the despotism of ministers had applied it under preceding reigns; and, as a fortress it was formidable, particularly to those populous and mutinous faubourgs which its walls commanded, and which, in their riots, saw themselves under the fire of the cannon of its towers. To agitate these multitudes at its will, and make them act boldly, the republican faction then ardently desired that they might be rid of this imposing object. Honest men, even the most peaceful and most enlightened, wished too that the bastille might be destroyed, because they hated the despotism of which it was the bulwark; and in this wish they consulted their personal security more than their real safety; for the despotism of licence is a thousand times more dreadful than that of authority; and the unbridled populace is the most cruel of tyrants. The bastille then should not have been destroyed; but its keys should have been deposited in the sanctuary of the laws.

The court thought it impregnable; it would have been so, or its attack and siege would have cost rivers of blood, if it had been defended; but the man to whom the guard of it was confided, the Marquis de Launay, would not, or dared not, or could not, use the means he had of rendering its resistance murderous; and this populace, that so vilely assassinated him, owed him thanks and praises.

De Launay had expected to intimidate the crowd; but it is evident that he wished to spare it. He had fifteen pieces of cannon on the towers; and, whatever calumny may have said to palliate the crime of his assassination, not one single cannon-shot was fired from these towers. There were besides, in the interior of the castle, three cannon loaded with case shot, pointed in front of the draw-bridge. These would have made great slaughter at the moment when the people came pouring in crowds into the first court; he fired but one, and that but once. He was provided with fire-arms of every kind, with six hundred muskets, twelve

rampart muskets, carrying balls of a pound and a half, and four hundred *biscatens*. He had procured from the arsenal abundance of ammunition, bullets, fifteen thousand cartridges, and twenty thousand pounds of powder. In fine, he had collected on the two towers of the drawbridge a mass of stones and broken iron, in order to crush the besiegers, if they should advance to the foot of the walls. But, in all these preparations to sustain a siege, he had forgotten provisions; and shut up in his castle with eighty invalids, thirty-two Swiss soldiers and his staff, all the store he had on the day of the attack consisted of two sacks of flour and a little rice; a proof that all the rest was only to inspire terror.

The small number of Swiss soldiers that had been sent to him were sure men and well disposed to defend themselves; the invalids were not so, and he must have known that; but at least he ought not to have exposed them to the fear of dying with hunger. Too inferior to his situation, and in that stupor with which the presence of danger strikes a weak mind, he looked on it with a steadfast but troubled eye; and rather motionless with astonishment than with resolution. Unhappily, not a man in the council supplied the foresight that he wanted.

To intoxicate the people with this first success, the attack and capture of the bastille were extravagantly extolled as a great exploit. The following is the account of this affair, which I have learned from the very mouth of him who was proclaimed and borne in triumph as the conductor of the enterprise, and as its hero.

"The bastille," said the brave Elie to me, "was not taken by main strength. It surrendered even before it was attacked. It surrendered on the promise that I gave, upon the honour of a French officer, and on the part of the people, that not a man should be hurt if the fortress surrendered." This is the simple fact, and such as Elie attests it to me. The following details of it are written as he dictates.

The fore-courts of the bastille had been abandoned. Some determined men having dared to break the chains of the draw-bridge which barred the entrance into the first court, the people rushed in there in crowds; and, deaf to the voice of the soldiers who, from the tops of the towers, forbore to fire on them, and cried out to them to retire, they persisted in advancing toward the walls of the castle. It was then that they were fired upon by the soldiers; and being put to flight, they saved themselves under the covert of the fore-courts. One killed, and a few wounded, spread terror even to the town-hall; multitudes came to demand urgently, in the name of the people, that deputations might be resorted to, in order to stop the carnage. Two of these deputations arrived, one by the arsenal, and the other by the side of the faux-bourg Saint-Antoine. "Advance," cried the invalids to them from the tops of the towers, "we will not fire on you: advance with your flag. The governor is going down, the castle bridge will be let down, in order to introduce you, and we will give hostages." The white flag was already hoisted on the towers, and the soldiers held their arms inverted in sign of peace. But neither of the deputations dared to advance so far as the last fore-

court. At the same time, the crowd was pressing toward the draw-bridge, and firing from all sides. The besieged then had reason to think that these appearances of deputation were but a trick to surprise them; and after having cried in vain to the people not to advance, they found themselves obliged to fire in their turn.

The people, repulsed a second time, and furious at seeing some of their own body fall under the fire of the fortress, took that revenge in which it usually indulges. The barracks and shops of the fore-court were pillaged; the house of the governor was delivered to the flames. The firing of one cannon, loaded with case shot, and a discharge of musketry, had driven back this crowd of robbers and incendiaries; when, at the head of a dozen brave citizens, Elie, advancing to the very edge of the ditch, cried out to the besieged to surrender, promising that not a man should be hurt. He then perceived a hand extended through an opening in a part of the draw-bridge, presenting to him a note. This note was received by means of a plank that was held over the ditch; it was written in these words: "We have twenty thousand pounds of powder. We will blow up the castle if you do not accept our capitulation. Signed De Launay."

Elie, after having read the note, cried out that he accepted it; and, on the part of the fort, all hostilities ceased. However, De Launay, before he gave himself up to the people, wished that the capitulation should be ratified and signed at the town-hall, and that, to secure his own safety and that of the soldiers, an imposing guard should receive and protect them. But the unfortunate invalids, thinking to hasten their deliverance, did violence to the governor, by crying out from the court, *the Bastille surrenders*.

It was then that De Launay, seizing the match of a cannon, threatened to go and set fire to the powder magazine; and perhaps he was firmly resolved to do it. The centinels who guarded the magazine presented to him their bayonets; and in spite of himself, without further precaution or delay, he saw himself forced to surrender.

The little draw-bridge of the fort being first opened, Elie entered with his companions, all brave and honourable men, and fully determined to keep his word. On seeing him, the governor went up to him, embraced him, and presented him his sword, with the keys of the bastille.

"I refused his sword," said Elie to me, "and took only the keys." His companions received the staff and the officers of the garrison with the same cordiality, swearing to serve them as a guard and defence; but they swore in vain.

As soon as the great bridge was let down (and it is not known by what hand that was done) the people rushed into the court of the castle, and, full of fury, seized on the troop of invalids. The Swiss, who were dressed in linen frocks, escaped among the crowd, all the rest were arrested. Elie, and the honest men who had entered first with him, exerted all their efforts to tear from the hands of the people the victims which they themselves had delivered to them. But ferocity kept fast hold of its prey. Several of these soldiers, whose lives had been promised them,

were assassinated; others were dragged like slaves through the streets of Paris. Twenty-two were brought to the Grève, and, after humiliations and inhuman treatment, they had the affliction of seeing two of their comrades hung. When they were presented at the town-hall, a furious madman said to them; "You have fired on your fellow-citizens; you deserve to be hung: and you shall be so presently." Fortunately the French guards interceded for their pardon; the people suffered themselves to be persuaded. But they had no pity for the officers of the garrison. De Launay, torn from the arms of those who wished to save him, had his head cut off under the walls of the town. In the midst of his assassins, he defended his life with the courage of despair; but he fell under their numbers. Delorme Salbrai, his major, was murdered in the same manner. The adjutant, Mirai, had been so, near the bastille. Pernon, an old lieutenant of the invalids, was assassinated on the wharf Saint-Paul, as he was going to the hall. Another lieutenant, Caron, was covered with wounds. The head of the Marquis de Launay was carried about Paris by this same populace that he would have crushed, had he not been moved to pity.

Such were the exploits of those who have since been called the heroes and conquerors of the bastille. On the 14th of July 1789, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the people had assembled before it; at forty minutes after four it had surrendered. At half an hour after six the head of the governor was carried in triumph to the *Palais-Royal*. Among the number of conquerors, which were said to amount to eight hundred, many people have been mentioned who had not even approached the castle.

The people, after this conquest, intoxicated with new power, but perpetually full of suspicion and anxiety, and the more savage as they still shuddered at the dangers they had run, now shewed only the character of jealous and cruel tyrants. Government ought to have known that, for the people, there was no barrier from licence to crime, but the fear of punishment; and in a time of trouble and sedition the defence of the bastille was an object of the highest importance to public tranquillity. You have just seen to what excess it had been neglected. Neither Broglie, a minister and general, nor the king's council, nor the party of the nobles, no one had thought of inquiring whether its garrison was sure and sufficient, whether it had bread and meat, or whether the commander was a man of sufficiently cool and determined courage to defend it. They had either supposed it useless or unattackable, or rather they seemed to have forgotten it.

It is nevertheless true that, if De Launay had made use of his artillery, he would have struck Paris with awe. He recollected, without doubt, that he served a good king; and among the people every man knew it as well as he.

Paris, at the moment of the attack, had hastened toward the bastille. All sexes and ages were confounded around these ramparts that were loaded with cannon. What was it then that encouraged them? *The king consents that his people should be*



*threatened, but he will not consent that his people should be crushed. What a fatal lesson has been given to kings by the example of this!*

In the evening, the assembled crowds, thirsting for more blood, demanded the head of Flesselles, who, in the morning, they said, had refused them arms, and who, in connivance with the court, had betrayed, deceived, and trifled with them most insolently; and the Grève and the town-hall rang with these clamours. But the hot bed of fermentation and popular rage was not the Grève; it was the district Saint Roche, the quarter of the *Palais-Royal*; it was there that Flesselles had been proscribed:

During the attack of the bastille, this unfortunate man had attended at the committee of the town-hall, assailed by a troop of wretches who loaded him with insult and announced his death. After two hours of silence and of torture, he had resolved to go from the chamber of the committee into the great chamber, to demand of the people that he might be heard and tried by the general assembly of the electors, tired of life, and wishing rather to die than suffer so cruel an agony. And, indeed, by thus throwing himself into a pitiless crowd, he delivered himself to certain death. He went there, and took his seat in the circle of the electors. He saw himself aimed at from every side. But other incidents having diverted the fury of which he was the object, he profited of that interval; and leaning toward an ecclesiastic who was near him (it was the Abbé Fauchet) he took him by the hand, conjuring him, in a low voice, to hasten instantly to the district Saint Roche. "It is there that my head is demanded," added he; "there spring up all the accusations that are brought against me. Go and tell them that I only ask time to justify myself. Fauchet, moved by a sentiment of compassion for him, went to implore this grace, but implored it in vain. The object was to overawe those who, like Flesselles, might think themselves by duty attached to the king's party; and, in order to conquer probity by terror, more victims were requisite. The people were not yet sufficiently habituated to crime, and in order to train them to murder, their leaders wanted to exercise them. The district that conducted the insurrection was therefore inexorable, and Flesselles never saw him again from whom he expected his safety.

Here I ought to observe to you what those were, who were sent to the town-hall to demand the head of Flesselles. "They were," says a faithful witness, "men armed like savages. And what men? creatures that no man ever remembered to have met in open day. Where did they come from? Who had drawn them from their dark retreats?"

"At the head of the committee of the electors," says the same witness, "Flesselles still shewed some boldness: till the fatal moment he was listening to all with an air of interest and affability so natural, that he would have saved himself by it, if the resolution of destroying him had not been irrevocably taken. He witnessed the ferocious joy that was loudly manifested at the

sight of the lance which bore the head of the governor of the bastille. He witnessed the efforts made in those cruel moments, by some good citizens, to tear from the people some of its victims. He heard the cries of those who demanded that he himself should be delivered up to them. Yet, amid so many horrors, hazarding all in order to escape, and thinking himself for a moment forgotten, he returned to quit his place and slide in among the crowd. He had, indeed, penetrated it. But those who had pursued him into that chamber, and who, without doubt, had promised his death, pursued him still, crying out to him: *to the Palais Royal! to the Palais Royal!* "With all my heart," said he to them as he went out. And the moment afterward, on the stair-case of the town-hall, one of the villains blew out his brains with a pistol. This head too was carried about Paris in triumph, and this triumph was applauded. It was the same with the murder of the invalid soldiers, who were torn to pieces in the streets, so completely had the delirium of rage stifled every feeling of humanity."

"I have remarked," adds my witness, using an expression of Tacitus, "that if among the people few men then dared crime, many wished it, and all winked at it. These wretches were not of the nation, these villains that filled the the town-hall, some almost naked, others strangely dressed in cloaths of different colours, mad, and for the most part not knowing what they wanted, or demanded the death of those who were proscribed and marked out to them, and demanding it in a tone which more than once it was not possible to resist"

If the national assembly could have had any presentiment of the evils with which the kingdom was threatened by this dreadful anarchy; if it had foreseen how impotent its own efforts would be to force back into the bonds of legitimate authority this ferocious beast, which it was eager to unchain; if those who flattered it had thought that they themselves might perhaps one day be its prey, they would have shuddered with a salutary fear. But, to give to themselves a reigning authority, they only thought of disarming that which alone could have saved all.

The citizens of Paris, blinded as they were to their true interests, abandoned themselves to the transports of an extravagant joy, when it was decided that the bastille should be destroyed. The people, under the reign of Lewis XI, would not have expressed more joy to see the iron cages broken. History, however, will render this testimony to the memory of Lewis XVI, that of seven prisoners, who were found in the bastille, not one had been sent there under his reign.

While the city of Paris loudly declared itself in insurrection against the royal authority, the instigators of the rebellion triumphed at Versailles, in appearing to lament misfortunes and crimes which they had commanded; and, in order to alarm the king, they afflicted him with them every day. "You rend my heart more and more," answered he, "at last, by the account you give me of the misfortunes of Paris. It is not possible to be-

lieve, that the orders which I have given to the troops are the cause of these evils." No, they were not so, for they were confined to the maintenance of order and peace.

At the same time the assembly most urgently solicited the king to remove the troops, to dismiss the new ministers, and to recal those who preceded them. He began by ordering the retreat of those troops that were stationed in the *Champ-de-Mars*. But no orders were given for the departure of the other camps; and in Paris, which still believed itself threatened with an assault, the night of the 14th and 15th of July was terrible. The people, yet more savage, shuddered with fear and with rage; the motions of the *Palais-Royal* were lists of proscription. The next day, through a crowd of jarring opinions, that agitated the national assembly, the voice of the Baron de Marguerit was favourably heard. "It is not," said he, "in circumstances so afflicting that we ought to debate. Every superfluous word is a crime against humanity. I persist in the motion that I proposed yesterday, to send new deputies instantly to the king, who shall say to him: Sire, blood flows, and it is that of your subjects. Each day, each instant adds to the frightful disorders that reign in the capital, and in the whole kingdom. Sire, the evil is at its height. It is by removing the troops from Paris and Versailles, it is by charging the deputies of the nation to carry words of peace in your name, that calm may be restored. Yes, Sire, there is one way worthy of you, and above all of your personal virtues; it is founded on the unalterable love of Frenchmen for their king, it is to place on this day all your confidence in the representatives of your faithful nation. We conjure you, Sire, to join the national assembly without delay, in order to listen to truth, and advise with the natural council of your majesty on the measures best adapted to re-establish calm and union, and to secure the safety of the state."

This motion was carried by acclamation, and a new deputation was going to wait on the king, when the Duke de Liancourt announced, that the king himself was coming, and that he was bringing with him the most favourable dispositions.

This news caused the most lively joy in the assembly, and all honest men were expressing it, when Mirabeau hastened to repress it. "The blood of our brothers is flowing in Paris," said Mirabeau; "that good city is in the horrors of convulsion, in order to defend its own liberty and ours; and can we abandon ourselves to joy before we know that calm, peace, and happiness, are to be re-established there? Though all the ills of the people were to cease, should we be insensible to those they have already suffered? Let a mournful respect be the first reception given to the monarch by the representatives of an unhappy people. The silence of the people is the lesson of kings."

As if the blood that was shed, as if the crimes of the people, the crimes commanded by himself and by his accomplices, could have been imputed to the king! Yet, in spite of the evidence of so black a calumny, the vehemence of this speech had replunged the assembly into a melancholy silence, when the king appeared;

and standing in the middle of the deputies, who stood likewise to hear him, spoke as follows :

" *Gentlemen*, I have assembled you in order to consult you on the most important affairs of the state. There is none more urgent, nor that affects my heart more sensibly, than the frightful disorders that reign in the capital. The chief of the nation comes with confidence into the midst of its representatives, to express to them his affliction, and invite them to suggest means of restoring order and calm. I know that unjust prejudices have been encouraged; I know that some men have dared to publish, that your persons were not in safety. Can it be necessary to quiet you on such culpable rumours, at once contradicted by my known character? Well, then, 'tis I who incorporate myself with my people; 'tis I who resign myself to you. Aid me, on this occasion, to secure the safety of the state. I expect it from the national assembly. The zeal of the representatives of my people, met for the common safety, is to me a sure guarantee of it; and, reckoning on the fidelity and love of my subjects, I have given orders to the troops to remove from Paris and Versailles. I authorize you, I request you, to make known my intentions in the capital."

After the answer of the president, who finished by soliciting his majesty, for the assembly, a constant, free, and immediate communication with his person, the king withdrew, when the whole assembly hastened to put itself in his suite, and formed his train from the hall to the palace.

This national train, accompanying the king through a vast multitude that rent the air with acclamations and with vows, whilst, from the balcony, in front of the palace, the queen, embracing the dauphin, presented him to the people, and seemed to recommend him to the deputies of the nation, was without doubt a majestic sight. But this triumph was really that of the conspirators, to whom the king had now abandoned himself. The confidants of the revolution were still in small numbers. The rest were all sincere. But the crafty knaves, insulting at the bottom of their hearts the noble sincerity of the king, and the credulous simplicity of the multitude, applauded themselves for the rapid progress they were making toward dominion, and suffered these sentiments of joy and mutual love to exhale, because they knew they could suppress them when their purpose should be ripe.

The numerous deputation that was sent to Paris was received there, from the barrier to the town-hall, by an army of one hundred thousand men, differently armed with instruments of carnage. A scene that was evidently prepared, as it were, to display the means they had of enforcing obedience, if the king had not yielded; and with this terrible parade was mixed the joy of conquerors, of that unbridled liberty which had produced only crimes, and with which even the best citizens suffered themselves to be intoxicated. A blockade, a siege, a famine, a massacre were the black phantoms which had been employed to frighten them; and in seeing the troops retire that were supposed to

be charged with the commission of these crimes, Paris thought it had nothing more to fear.

On their arrival at the town-hall, the deputies were applauded and crowned as the saviours and deliverers of a besieged city : a lasting calumny which the Marquis de la Fayette, in the speech he pronounced, did not think proper to contradict, not daring to render homage to the intentions of the king, for fear of offending the people.

It would have been natural, it would have been just to call to mind, at that moment, what the king had so often said, that he had only assembled the troops in order to maintain in Paris order, safety, and calm, and to serve as a safeguard for the tranquillity of good citizens. It was this that La Fayette passed over in silence.

"Gentlemen," said he, "the moment is at length arrived which the national assembly most ardently desired : *the king was deceived*, he is no longer so. He has been to day in the midst of us without arms, without troops, without that parade which good kings despise. He has told us that he had given orders to the troops to withdraw : *let us forget our misfortunes*, or rather let us only remember them to avoid for ever their repetition."

In his turn, the sincere and courageous Lally Tolendal addressed the people ; and, in order to give my narrative all the truth that it can possess, it is his that I am going to transcribe.

"In the hall in which we were received there were," says he, "citizens of all classes. An immense crowd was on the square, and I proved that it would have been very easy, had all wishes harmonised to effect it, to turn all their enthusiasm to the side of order and justice. They leaped for joy on hearing me speak of the honour of the French name. When I told them that they should be free, that the king had promised it, that he had come to throw himself into our arms, that he trusted in them, that he had sent back his troops, they interrupted me by cries of *vive le roi !* When I said to them, we come to bring you peace on the part of the king, and of the national assembly : we must now carry back peace on your part to the king and to the national assembly ; it was who should first repeat the cry of *peace ! peace !* When I added : you love your wives, your children, your king, your country ; all answered a thousand times, *yes*. When at last, pressing them still closer, I ventured to say to them : I'm sure you would not wish to torture all you love by bloody discord, would you ? There shall be no more proscriptions, shall there ? The law alone ought to pronounce them. There will be no more bad citizens : your example will reclaim them, and make them good. They again repeated *peace*, and no more *proscriptions*."

Thus, from that time nothing was more easy than to re-establish order, and maintain the happiest understanding between the monarch and his people. The king desired nothing so much as to be loved ; and at that price nothing was painful to him. The city of Paris had just appointed Bailly as its major, and La

Fayette as commander of its militia. The king, who alone ought to have named to these two places, readily sanctioned the choices which the city had made. It had solicited Necker's recall; Necker was recalled, as well as Montmorin, La Luzerne, and Saint Priest, who had shared his disgrace; and the new ministers prevented their dismissal by resigning. In fine, Paris, disordered anew by its perfidious *agitators*, desired that the king might come himself to the town-hall to dissipate its false alarms, and the king repaired thither (on the 17th of July, 1789) without any other guard than a few armed citizens of Paris and of Versailles, in the midst of two hundred thousand men armed with scythes, pick-axes, guns, and pikes, dragging cannon with them.

On the arrival of the king, and on his passage, all acclamation in his favour was forbidden; and if, to the cries of *vive la nation!* some added, *vive le roi!* there were confederate villains who imposed silence on them. The king perceived it, and he brooked this insult. After having heard at the barrier the speech of the mayor Bailly, in which he told him that if Henry the Fourth had conquered his city, that city in its turn had just conquered its king, he received at the town-hall the republication cockade; he took it without repugnance; and, as his reconciliation with his people was sincere, he shewed so much candour and goodness that at last all hearts were moved by them. The felicitations of the orators raised emotion to enthusiasm; and when Lally Tolendal spoke, nothing was heard but bursts of sensibility and transports of love.

"Well, citizens," said he, "are you now satisfied? There is your king whom you demanded so loudly, and whose name alone excited your transports when two days ago we uttered it amongst you. Enjoy his presence and his benefits. There is the king who has restored to you your national assemblies, and who desires to perpetuate them: who wishes to establish your liberties, your properties on an eternal basis: who has offered you, as it were, to enter into partnership with him in his authority, only reserving to himself that which was necessary to him for your happiness, that which ought always to belong to him, and which you ought to conjure him never to lose. Ah! let him at length enjoy consolation; let his noble and pure heart enjoy from you that peace of which it is so worthy; and since, surpassing the virtues of his predecessors, he has desired to place his power and his grandeur in your love, to be obeyed only by love, to be guarded only by love, let us not be less feeling, nor less generous than our king; and let us prove to him that even his power, that even his grandeur have gained a thousand times more than they have sacrificed."

"And you, Sire, permit a subject who is neither more faithful, nor more devoted to you than all those who surround you; but who is as much so as any one of those who obey you, permit him to raise his voice toward you, and to say to you: behold this people that adores you, this people that your presence intoxicates, and whose sentiments for your sacred person can never be

the object of a doubt. Look, Sire, comfort, console yourself by looking on all the citizens of your capital; look at their eyes, listen to their voices, penetrate into their hearts that bound to meet yours. There is not a man here who is not ready to shed the last drop of his blood for you, and for your legitimate authority. No, Sire, this French generation is not so unfortunate as to have been reserved to belie fourteen ages of fidelity. We will all perish, if need be, to defend a throne that is as sacred to us as to you, and to the august family that we placed there eight hundred years ago. Believe us, Sire; be assured that we have never inflicted a painful wound in your heart that has not rent our own; that, amidst public calamities, it is one to afflict you, even by a complaint that admonishes, that implôres, and that never accuses you. At length all sorrows will now disappear, and all troubles be appeased. One single word from your mouth has calmed all. Our virtuous king has recalled his virtuous councils; perish the public enemies who would again sow division between the nation and its chief. King, subjects, citizens, let us mingle our hearts, our vows, our efforts, and display to the eyes of the universe the magnanimous spectacle of one of its finest nations, free, happy, triumphant under a just, dear, and revered king, who, no longer owing any thing to force, will owe all to his own virtues and to our love."

Tolendal was twenty times interrupted by cries of *vive le roi*! The people were charmed to be restored to their natural feelings; the king partook them; and his emotion expressed them more vividly than eloquence could have done; but if these feelings had been lasting between his people and him, he would have been too powerful in the opinion of the conspirators who wanted to reduce him to be no more than the mere phantom of a king.

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## BOOK XVIII.

THE national assembly, on the side of the commons, was marked, as well as the people, by two opposing spirits and two adverse characters: one moderate, weak, and timid; it was that of the greater number: the other passionate, extravagant, impetuous, and daring; it was that of the conspirators. We had seen the latter announcing only rational and pacific views, in order to guide the former at its will. We had heard one of its organs conjure the clergy, *in the name of the god of peace*, to unite with that order which meditated the ruin of the church. We have just seen Mirabeau, in his address to the king, affect a hypocritical respect and zeal; but when, after having assured itself of the determination and ardent attachment of the populace, of the effeminacy, indifference, and timidity of the rich and peaceful class, this par-

ty saw itself able to govern opinion with absolute sway, it ceased to dissemble.

The very day after the king had gone to resign himself with such sincerity in the national assembly, the republican faction undertook to lay down as a principle, that the assembly had a right to interfere in the formation of the ministry; and the two orators who on this point openly attacked the royal authority, were Mirabeau and Barnave, both endowed with popular eloquence; Mirabeau with more phrenzy and with bursts of passion, often too with wile and with artifice; Barnave with more frankness, more nerve, and more vigour. Both of them had supported the opinion that the king should be deprived of the free choice of his ministers; a right which Tolendal and Mounier had strongly defended, by maintaining that without this freedom in the choice of the objects of his confidence, the king would be nothing. The decree resulting from this discussion had left it undetermined; but the question, once agitated, was nevertheless the signal for combat between the two powers.

For this combat, the commons wanted a force ever active and threatening; and thence all the obstacles that Tolendal encountered in his motion of the 20th of July. It is he again whom you must hear:

"From the point where we then were, it was evident," says he, "that nothing more was to be feared for liberty, than the projects of faction and the dangers of anarchy. The national assembly had only to put itself on its guard against the excess of its own power. There was not a moment to lose to re-establish public order. News had been already received that the commotions which had shaken the capital, had been felt, not only in the neighbouring cities, but in the distant provinces. They were announcing themselves in Brittany; they existed in Normandy and in Burgundy; they threatened to spread throughout the kingdom. Emissaries, evidently dispatched from a central point, travelled every road, traversing cities and villages without sojourning in any, getting the alarm bell rung, and announcing the approach of foreign troops, or of hordes of plunderers, crying out every where, *to arms!* and frequently distributing money."

(Indeed I myself saw some of them traversing on horseback the hamlet where I then was, and crying out to us that hussars were ravaging the country around us, and setting fire to the ripe corn; that such a village was on fire, and another inundated with blood. There was nothing in it; but in the minds of the people, fear excited fury; and that was what the faction desired.)

With his hands full of letters, that attested the excesses every where committed with impunity, Tolendal repaired to the national assembly, and there proposed the heads of a proclamation, which, after having presented to all Frenchmen the picture of their situation, of their duties, and of their hopes, invited them all to peace, secured their lives and properties, threatened the wicked, protected the good, maintained the laws in vigour, and the courts of justice in full force. "This project," says he, "was covered with applause: a second reading was demanded, and the acclamations



redoubled. But what was my astonishment when I saw a party rise to oppose it! . . . . . According to one, my sensibility had seduced my reason. These fires, these imprisonments, these assassinations, were crosses that we should learn to support because we ought to have expected them. According to another, my imagination had created dangers that did not exist. There was no danger but in my motion . . . . . Danger for liberty, because it would take from the people a salutary fear which should rather be encouraged than suppressed; danger for the assembly, that would see Paris declare against it, if it adopted the motion; danger for the legislative power, which, after having broken the frightful springs of empire, would thus regenerate them with new strength."

The murder of Berthier, the intendant of Paris, that of Foulon, his father-in-law, both massacred at the Grève, their heads carried about the city, and the body of Foulon dragged and torn in the *Palais-Royal*, shewed that the populace, drunk with blood, still thirsted for it, and seemed to cry out to the assembly to hasten and adopt the motion of Tolendal. Hear what he says himself of the slight impression which this horrible incident made.

"The next day (the 21st of July) I was waked by cries of grief. I saw enter my chamber a young man, pale, disfigured, who hastened eagerly to throw his arms around me, and who said to me as he sobbed, Sir, you have passed fifteen years of your life in defending the memory of your father, save the life of mine, let him be heard by his judges. Present me to the national assembly, and let me there demand that my father may be tried. It was the son of the unfortunate Berthier. I conducted him instantly to the president of the assembly. Misfortune would have it that there was no sitting in the morning. In the evening it was too late. The father-in-law and the son-in-law had been torn in pieces.

"You may imagine," continues Tolendal, "that at the very first sitting I hastened to fix the general attention on this horrible event. I spoke in the name of a son whose father had just been massacred; and a son who was in mourning for his father (Barnave) dared to reproach me with feeling when I should only tell. He added what I will not even repeat (*was then the blood which has been shed so very precious?*) and every time he raised his arms, in the midst of his sanguinary declamations, he shewed to every eye the mournful marks of his recent misfortune (*crape*) and the incontestable witnesses of his barbarous insensibility."

But such, among the factious, was the general depravity of soul, that with them cool cruelty passed for virtue, and humanity for weakness. Thirty-six country seats demolished or burned in one single province; in Languedoc, a M. de Barras cut to pieces before his wife who was with child, and just ready to lie in; in Normandy, a paralytic old man thrown upon a burning pile, and many other notorious excesses were either passed over in silence in the assembly, or treated as episodes, if any one denounced them there.

It was the policy of the conspirators to leave the people no time for reflection. Cooled but for a moment, they might have felt that they were misled and deceived, that their ambitious leaders only made

them accomplices in order to make them their slaves, and that, from crime to crime, they wanted to plunge them so deep in guilt that they should see no safety for themselves, but in executing all they might command. So that the proclamation proposed by Tolendal did not pass till all that could quiet the people had been blotted out of it. Beside, for fear of giving too much authenticity to this pacific proclamation, all weakened as it was, its opponents would not allow that it should be sent by the king into the provinces of the kingdom, and read in the churches; but only that the deputies should be entrusted with the care of sending it, each of them, to their constituents.

The 31st day of July was a day remarkable for Necker's return, and for the kind of triumph with which he was honoured at the town-hall.

In returning from Basle, where he had received the two letters for his recital, one from the king, the other from the national assembly, Necker had seen, on his road, the excesses in which the populace every where indulged; he had endeavoured to calm them, to spread on his passage milder feelings, and to inspire wherever he went a horror of injustice and of violence. He found the roads covered with Frenchmen who, at the events of Paris, at the assassinations near the town hall, had been chilled with horror and affright, and who were hastening away in search of another country. Informed of these bloody scenes, from that moment his most ardent wish had been to convert the people of Paris from their blind barbarities, to restore them to the feelings of humanity, and make them efface the spot which its criminal violence had imprinted on the national character. I speak here after what he himself has said, and whatever errors, whatever faults, whatever wrongs, may be attributed to him, no one at least will here doubt his sincerity. In this confidence, I will give you his own recital, which, without being less true, will excite more interest.

"Great and happy day for me (the 28th of July, 1789)" says he in his recital, "welcome and memorable epoch of my life, when, after having received the most touching marks of affection on the part of an immense people, I obtained from its numerous deputies, assembled in the town-hall, and from itself afterwards, with cries of joy, not only the entire liberty of the prisoner whom I had defended (the Baron de Bezenval) but a general amnesty, a complete oblivion of all the motives of complaint and distrust, a generous renunciation of the sentiments of hatred and of vengeance which had reigned so potently, in fine, a kind of peace and reconciliation with those numerous citizens, some of whom had already fled from their country, and others were preparing to quit it. This honourable resolution was purchased with my tears. I had asked it in the name of the interest which I at that moment inspired; I had asked it as a reward for my last sacrifice; I had asked it as the only and single recompence to which I would ever pretend. I knelt, I humbled myself in every way in order to succeed. I exerted, in short, all the powers of my soul, and, seconded by the eloquence of a generous and feeling citizen (Clermont-Tonnerre) I obtained the object of my wishes; and this first favour was grant-

ed me with one unanimous voice, and with all the transport of enthusiasm and of kindness that could render it most dear."

The following was the resolution of the general assembly of the electors at the town-hall, on the same day, 31st of July.

"On the truly sublime, and touching speech of M. Necker, the assembly of the electors, penetrated with the sentiments of justice and humanity which he breathes, has decreed that the day on which this dear and necessary minister has been restored to France, ought to be a day of rejoicing. It therefore declares, in the name of the inhabitants of this capital, certain of not being disavowed, that it pardons all its enemies, that it proscribes all acts of violence contrary to the present decree, and that it henceforth regards those as the only enemies of the nation who shall disturb the public tranquillity by any excess.

"It decrees further that the present decree shall be read in the parish churches, published by the sound of trumpet in all the streets and squares, and sent to all the municipalities of the kingdom, and the applauses it will obtain shall distinguish good Frenchmen."

This was the safety of the state, but the ruin of projects that could only succeed by disorder and by terror.

"By the evening of this same memorable day," continues Necker, "all was changed. The chiefs of democracy had other intentions. They would consent neither to kindness, nor oblivion, nor amnesty; they had need of all the passions of the people; they had need above all of its distrusts; and they did not choose, at any price, that a great and important event should be attributed to my prayers and my influence. They therefore assembled the districts, and contrived to animate them against a declaration which their representatives, which the ancient electors named by them, which a general assembly at the town-hall had adopted with one unanimous voice, and which the first vow of the people had ratified. The national assembly was my hope in this unhappy opposition. But it favoured the opinion of the districts; and I saw the edifice of my happiness pulled to the ground. And what was the object of this happiness? To retain among us those who, by their wealth and expenditure, supported labour and encouraged industry; to see a sentiment of confidence and magnanimity substituted for jealous persecution; to prevent that exasperation, which is the inevitable consequence of fears and alarms, when we disdain to calm them; to preserve the French nation from those dreadful tribunals of inquisition known under the name of committees of inquiry; to render, in short, liberty more amiable by giving it an air less savage, and by shewing how it could ally itself with feelings of gentleness, of indulgence, and of kindness, the most beautiful ornament of human nature, and its first want. Ah! how many evils would have been prevented, if the resolution taken at the town-hall had not been destroyed, if the first vow of the people, that saintly impulse, had not been despised!"

When Necker spoke thus, he he was far from foreseeing what

enormities, what atrocious cruelties would crown the crime that were past.

But from that moment he ought to have felt how misplaced and miserably useless he would be among men disdaining every principle of morality, and all feelings of justice and humanity.

It was by exercising the most violent despotism, that the leaders of sedition had annulled the decree of the town-hall; and what Necker has passed over in silence, another witness, whom no one has dared to contradict, Tolendal, has told aloud.

"At the fall of night, the seditious had assembled in that *Palais-Royal*, famous from this time for all kinds of crimes, after having been so for every species of depravity; in that *Palais-Royal* where history will be obliged to say that morals were corrupted, troops debauched, the carcasses of the dead dragged in triumph, and the heads of the living proscribed. There they had sworn to obtain the revocation of the decree of the town-hall, and they had begun their march. One affrighted district had communicated its fear to several others; the troop had swelled; the town-hall had feared to see itself besieged; in fine, on the reclamation of a few districts only, the assembly of the electors had been forced to submit, and, by a new decree, had retracted that of the morning, saying that the one explained the other."

On the 1st of August, when, at the election of a president, Thouret was appointed by ballot, the murmurs and threats of the seditious were instantly heard in the assembly. The election was denounced at the *Palais-Royal* as treason; Thouret was proscribed there, if he accepted the presidency; the wretches threatened to go and assassinate him in his own house; he resigned, and this was a mortal blow to the liberty of the assembly; the greater number consisting of those weak souls on whom fear imposes silence or commands opinion.

The courts of justice themselves were awed; the laws were without force, and the people despised them. All had heard the ancient edicts declared null; they now refused to pay the taxes previously established; no one dared to compel them to it, and the faction made them believe that it had freed them from taxation.

In the mean time the treasury was quite empty, and its springs all nearly exhausted. Necker came to expose this penury to the assembly, and to request that it would authorize a loan of one million and a quarter at five per cent. This moderate interest was maliciously cavilled at; it was reduced to four; and the public now seeing in Necker only a minister opposed and disliked by the commons, the signal for his fall was the end of his credit.

A patriotic contribution was the momentary resource resorted to by the assembly; and then, leaving the minister to torment himself with inquietude in order to provide for the exigencies of the state, it entered upon the work of a constitution which it authorized itself to create, not only without the powers and consent of the nation, both in contempt of the express command which the nation itself had inserted, in the instructions of its constitu-

ents, not to touch the ancient bases and fundamental principles of the existing monarchy.

Till then, the feeble party had uniformly hoped to put an end to the usurpations of the commons, and all the means of reconciliation had been employed. On the 4th of August, the evening sitting had been marked by resolutions and by sacrifices that ought to have pacified all. The clergy and the nobility had, by acclamation, renounced their privileges. These renunciations, offered with a kind of enthusiasm, had been accepted with transport; and the very great majority of the assembly considered them as the seal of an entire and lasting reconciliation. The good archbishop of Paris had proposed that a *Te Deum* should be sung as a thanksgiving on this great event; Tolendal, who never lost sight of the state's welfare, had moved that Lewis the sixteenth should be proclaimed *the Restorer of French liberty*; these propositions were unanimously carried. In fine, the king himself had consented without reserve to all the renunciations made and decreed in the sitting of the 4th of August. But he refused his assent plainly and simply to the ambiguous declaration of the rights of man, and to the nineteen articles of the constitution that had been presented to him. There were other articles to which all foresaw that he would refuse his sanction; and although the veto which he reserved for himself was only suspensive, it was enough to arrest the progress of the revolution. It became necessary to overcome this obstacle; and if force were resorted to in order to conquer his opposition, the king might well form a resolution to which he had so long refused his concurrence.

This was indeed the true reason why the project of having the king at Paris was formed, and why thirty thousand seditious rebels were sent to Versailles (the 5th of October 1789) with artillery at their head, and a crowd of those impure women who in all riots are made to march in front. The pretext of their mission was to go and complain of the dearness of bread.

I will not describe the brutality of that populace thus led to Versailles to carry off the king and his family. The trial of Le Châtelet has revealed that horrible mystery, that crime from which the assembly in vain endeavoured to clear the Duke d'Orleans and Mirabeau. The facts that relate to it are consigned in the memoirs of the time which my children will read. They will there see, and shudder while they see, the faithful bodyguards, who were forbidden by the king to fire on the people, massacred even to the threshold of the queen's chamber, and their heads carried on pikes under the windows of the palace; they will see that affrighted queen trembling for the king and for her children, fly from her bed which, a moment afterward, was pierced with a hundred bayonets, and hasten to throw herself into the arms of the king, where she expected death; they will see this august pair, in the midst of a savage people, oppose to their rage the most magnanimous mildness, shew them their children, in order to move them to compassion, and ask what can be done to appease them. *Let the king come with us to Paris.* This was the answer of

the people, and the avowal of the plot which it was sent to execute.

What cannot be forgotten is, that, on the night when this sanguinary horde filled the courts of the palace, some individuals having raised their voices in the hall of the deputies, to propose that the assembly should go in a body to range itself around the king, and to repress the commotion of the people, Mirabeau insolently opposed this motion, saying that it did not become the dignity of the assembly to move from its place. He did not care to oppose the execution of his own orders.

The king might still have fled from these impious scenes; every thing was prepared for his departure; his carriages, his guards were waiting for him and his family at the gates of the orangery; some faithful friends pressed him to seize the time when the people, dispersed in Versailles, was resigning itself to sleep. But a greater number, trembling and in tears, conjured him on their knees not to abandon them. Deceived by the assurance of La Fayette, who answered for the speedy restoration of tranquillity, the king, by the fatality of his stars or of his character, abandoned himself to his destiny, and lost that moment which was never to return.

As soon as he arrived at the Tuilleries with his family, the assembly declared that it could not remain separated from the person of the king; it came and established itself in Paris, on the 19th of October 1789; and in these changes, the good people fancied they beheld their safety.

The first act of the king at Paris was his acceptance of the first articles of the constitution, and the sanction of the rights of man.

These memoirs are not a history of the revolution. You will read it elsewhere, my children, and you will observe, after this epoch of the 19th of October, a long train of memorable events, all easy to foresee after the first victories of the successful party. The property of the clergy declared national on the 2d of November; the creation of assignats on the 21st of December; the quantity, form, and fabrication of this money, determined on the 17th of April 1790; nobility and all titles abolished on the 19th of June following; the king's flight on the 21st of June 1791; his return to Paris on the 25th; finally, the acceptance of the whole constitution by the king on the 3d of September, and the promulgation of this act on the 28th of the same month.

There terminated the session of the constituent assembly; and it was then that I was separated from that friend who, in the labours and perils of the tribune, had so honourably fulfilled his own duties and my hopes, and who had just been called to Rome to be loaded there with honours; the Abbé Maury, that man of talents so rare, and of courage that equalled his rare talents.

In speaking to you of him, I have only given you, my dear children, the idea of a good friend and of an amiable man; I ought to make him known to you as a public man, and such as his enemies themselves could not help considering him; invariable in the principles of justice and of humanity; the intrepid defender of

the throne and the altar; at variance every day with the Mirabeaus and Barnaves; the constant object of the threats of popular declaimers; exposed to the insults and to the poignards of the people without, and certain that the principles whose cause he pleaded would fall under superior numbers; every moment repulsed, every moment returning to the combat, without ever having been shaken or wearied by the certainty of being conquered, by the danger of being torn in pieces, or by the clamours and outrages of an unbridled populace. He smiled at the threats of the people; he answered with humour or with energy to the invectives of the tribunes, and returned to his adversaries with a coolness that was not to be troubled. The order of his speeches, almost all spoken *ex tempore*, and for hours together, the concatenation of his ideas, the clearness of his arguments, the choice and abundance of his expressions, so just, so correct, so harmonious, and always animated, without any hesitation, rendered it almost impossible for his hearers to persuade themselves that his eloquence was not studied and premeditated; and yet the readiness with which he rushed to the tribune, and seized occasions to speak, forced them to believe that he spoke from abundant knowledge.

I have myself been present more than once when he has dictated from memory what he had spoken on the preceding day, complaining that in his recollections his vigour was weakened and his warmth extinguished. "It is only the fire and ardour of the tribune," used he to say, "that can render us eloquent." This phenomenon, of which there are few examples, can only be explained by the prodigious capacity of a memory which nothing has escaped, and by immense studies; it is true that, to that magazine of knowledge and ideas which Cicero has considered as the arsenal of the orator, Maury added the habit and familiar exercise of oratorical language; an inestimable advantage, which the pulpit had given him.

As to the firmness of his courage, it had for its principle the contempt of death and that resignation of life, without which, he used to say, a nation could no more have good representatives than good soldiers.

Such had the man shewn himself who has constantly been my friend, who is so still, and ever will be so: the revolutions of his fortune and of mine can effect no change in this mutual and solid friendship.

The moment when, embracing, perhaps for the last time, we bade each other farewell, we felt something of a religious and melancholy gloom. "My dear friend," said he, "in defending the good cause, I have done what I could; I have exhausted my forces, not to succeed in an assembly where I was listened to in vain, but to throw profound ideas of justice and of truth into the spirit of the nation and of all Europe. I have even the ambition of being heard by posterity. It is not without heart-rending grief that I quit my country and my friends, but I carry with me the firm hope that the revolutionary power will be destroyed."

I admired this indefatigable perseverance of my friend; but after having seen him contend in vain against that force which either bore along or dashed in pieces all that opposed its rapid course, I had but little hope of living long enough to see the end of our misfortunes.

The legislative assembly, installed on the 1st of October 1791, followed and even surpassed the spirit of the constituent assembly. I here again only recal dates, in order to arrive at what is personal to me.

On the 29th of November, a decree was passed, inviting the king to request the princes of the empire not to suffer the armaments of the fugitive princes.

On the 14th of December the king delivered, on his declaration to those princes, a speech that was applauded.

On the 1st of January 1792, the decree of accusation passed against the brothers of Lewis XVI.

On the 1st of March happened the death of the emperor Leopold.

On the 29th of May, the assassination of Gustavus the Third, king of Sweden.

On the 26th of April, declaration of war by France against the new king of Hungary and Bohemia.

In the month of June, the king refused his sanction to two decrees; and this refusal becomes the pretext of the insurrection of the *fauxbourgs*, that are sent in a vast tumultuous mass to the Tuileries.

The king, who heard them threaten with savage cries and horrible imprecations to break open the doors of his apartment, ordered that they might be opened. He presented himself with a calm air to hear their petition. They demanded that he should sanction the decrees to which he refused his assent. "My sanction is free," answered the king; "and this is not the moment either to solicit or to obtain it."

Two days afterward, in his proclamation against this act of violence, he declared that it would never be necessary to wrest from him his assent to whatever he should think just, and productive of public good; but that he would expose, if it were needful, his peace, and even his safety, in order to do his duty.

This resistance should have been a curb to popular despotism. The free acceptance of the laws, and the right which the king had reserved to himself of suspending those which he did not approve, was the fundamental article of a temperate monarchy, and of the oath that had been freely taken throughout the kingdom, *to the nation, the law, and the king*: but that alone would have arrested the tumultuous march of the revolution, and the faction would not consent that their power should be limited.

The 31st of July was marked by the arrival of the Marseillais at Paris; a kind of satellites that the revolutionists keep at their orders for great executions.

On the 3d of August, in the name of the sections of Paris,



Pétion presented to the assembly a petition for the dethronement of the king.

On the 6th a report was studiously spread at the Tuileries that the king had resolved to fly.

It was then that, by a too just presentiment of what was going to happen, my wife urged me to quit the country-house which she had loved so much, and to go seek some retreat at a distance from Paris, where, in obscurity, we might breathe in peace.

We knew not whither to direct our steps. The tutor of our children decided our irresolution. It was he who assured us that in Normandy, where he was born, we should readily find a safe and peaceful asylum; but some time was requisite in order to procure it? and, on arriving at Evreux, we did not yet know where to lay our heads. The master of the inn, at which we alighted, had, at a few paces from the town, in the hamlet of Saint-Germain, a neat little house, seated on the borders of the Iton, and at the gate of the gardens of Navarre. He offered it to us. Charmed with this situation, it was there that we resolved to stay, till Charpentier's family should have found us a suitable dwelling nearer to Gaillon, his native place.

If, in the painful state in which our minds then were, any retreat could have been charming, that of this little hamlet would have been so to us; but we had scarcely arrived at Evreux, when we learned the horrible event of the tenth of August.

At Paris, at the dawn of day, of that day which was to lead in its train days yet more fatal, the squares and streets near the Tuileries were filled with armed men backed by a train of artillery. They were the people of the *fauxbourgs*, supported by the band of *Marseillais*, who came to besiege the king in his palace.

That unfortunate prince had only a few Swiss-guards for his defence: and though it has been said that there was in the garden of the Tuileries a crowd of brave and honest men, who would have rallied round his person if he had chosen to shew himself, without doubt he thought resistance either criminal or impossible; he was advised to repair with his family to the bosom of the national assembly; he fled thither.

In the mean while his brave Swiss soldiers, who, faithful to their orders, defended in the courts the approach to the palace, found themselves obliged to fire on the people. The people were repulsed, and the guards stood firm at their post, when they learned that the king had retired. Their courage then forsook them; and, having dispersed, they were almost all massacred in Paris.

The king was transferred to the prison of the tower of the temple, with his wife, his children, and his sister, on the 13th of August.

On the 31st of August, the mayor and the city attorney (Pétion and Manuel) presented themselves to the assembly, at the head of a deputation, in the name of which Tallien, its orator, announced "that a number of turbulent priests had been arrested

" and imprisoned, and that, in a few days, the soil of liberty " would be purged of their presence."

On the 2d of September, at the convent of the Carmelites of the Luxembourg, at the seminary of Saint-Firmin in Saint-Victor street, at the Abbey Saint-Germain-des-Prés, several prelates and a great number of priests were massacred. The carnage lasted till the 6th at the Hôtel de la Force.

On the 8th the prisoners from Orléans, sent to Versailles, were massacred there.

It was in the days of terror and of fear that a man came to lodge near us, in the hamlet of Saint-Germain, who, as I supposed, was not unknown to me; but, in his disguise, I had so much difficulty in recollecting where I could have seen him, that he was obliged to tell me his name. It was Lorry, the bishop of Angers. Our recollection of each other was made affecting by the unhappiness of his situation, which he did not cease to support with considerable courage and firmness.

We soon became social friends; at his desire our table was in common: and in better times this accidental connection would have been reciprocally agreeable. Lodged together on the borders of a beautiful river, in the most delightful season of the year, having enchanting gardens, and a superb forest for our walks, perfectly agreeing in our opinions, in our tastes, and in our principles, the remembrance of a world in which we had lived furnished us with subjects for conversation that were inexhaustible; but all these sweets were poisoned by the sorrows with which we were perpetually assailed.

The convention took the place of the legislature on the 21st of September. Its first decree was the abolition of royalty.

At the same time, at the name of republican liberty, columns of volunteers ran to the armies; we found ourselves in the track of their march, and they disturbed our repose. Beside, the approach of winter rendered the place where we were damp and unhealthy; we were obliged to quit it; and it was not without regret that we left the good bishop there. My wife and I retired to Couvécourt.

On the 11th of December the king appeared at the bar of the convention, and was there interrogated. He asked for two lawyers, Tronchet and Target, as his counsel.

Target refused his ministry to these venerable functions; the virtuous Malesherbes eagerly offered to take his place; this was consented to.

Tronchet and Malesherbes asked to have the honest and feeling De Seze to assist them, and that too was granted.

On the 26th the king appeared for the second time, with his three defenders. De Seze addressed the assembly, but the king had not allowed him, in his defence, any oratorical parade. In obeying him, De Seze was but the more touching.

On the 17th of January, 1793, the pain of death was pronounced by a majority of 366 votes against 355.

The king lodged an appeal to the nation. The appeal was rejected.

On the 19th it was decided, by a majority of 380 votes against 310, that there should be no delay in the execution of the sentence, and, on the 21st, Lewis XVI had his head cut off on the *Place Louis XV.*

His confessor, at the foot of the scaffold, pronounced these ever memorable words : *Son of Saint Lewis, ascend to heaven !*

The king on the scaffold wished to speak to the people : Santerre, one of the leaders of the *Fauxbourg* Saint Antoine, who commanded the troops, ordered the drums to beat, to drown his voice.

This execution was succeeded, at a little interval of time, by that of the three other prisoners in the Temple. On the 21st of January the king perished on the scaffold. On the 16th of October, the queen, his wife, shared the same fate. On the 21st of Floreal, in the following year, Elizabeth, the king's sister terminated her innocent life under the same instrument of death : and on the 20th Prairial of the same year, the dauphin died in the Temple.

## BOOK XIX.

THE French revolution might have had, in ancient Rome, an honourable example to follow. Lewis XVI had not one of the vices of the Tarquins, nor could he either be accused of pride or of violence ; without any other reason than that of being weary of its kings, France might have expelled them with their whole race.

But the 21st of January, 1793, began, and could but begin, the reign of terror.

The revolutionists appeared to have conceived the vast, the infernal project of depraving a whole people, of associating vices and crimes, of propagating bad morals by bad laws, and of realising, by a general corruption, all that is attributed to the dark genius of human nature.

Religious opinions, the belief in a God, the idea of futurity, could curb the inclination to crime ; the authority of the father could restrain the child ; morality, by its principles of humanity, of equity, and of modesty, could regenerate corrupted races. The project of depravation was directed against all these ties. We heard incredulity and blasphemy proclaimed ; we saw liberalism affect to despise the idea of a God, sacrilege insult the altars, and crime pride itself on the hope of annihilation ; we saw broken all the ties of subordination that nature forms ; children, made by the laws independent of their fathers, had only to wish for their death in order to be secure, without their consent and

in spite of their will, of sharing their spoil. The conjugal knot was still the means of perpetuating domestic virtues, and of keeping in intimate union the husband, the wife, and the child; this tie was rendered fragile at will; marriage became no more than a legal prostitution, a transient connection, which licentiousness, caprice, inconstancy, might form and dissolve as fancy varied. In fine, honour, public faith, decorum, respect for one's self and for opinion, the veneration which the saintly image of virtue inspired, still offered a rallying point for souls susceptible of repentant feelings, and awake to the impressions of example. All this was destroyed. The impudence of vice, the audacity of shame, the emulation of licence, even to the most unbridled dissoluteness, were professed and erected into maxims of republican morality; and the system of Mirabeau, and of the Duke d'Orleans, that system, whose aim was the dark corruption of a whole generation, seemed to reign throughout France. Thus was formed that revolutionary despotism, that Colossus of mire, kneaded and cemented with blood.

Retired as we were in our cottage of Abloville, whither we had gone on quitting Couvicourt, we did not cease to dread the influence of so corrupt an age on our children; and we were employing all our care to fortify them by a salutary and virtuous education, when the almost sudden death of their faithful tutor added a domestic affliction, that completed the measure of our sufferings. A putrid fever, of extreme malignity, robbed us of that excellent young man. Our children must remember the grief which this loss caused us, and the fear we had lest they should suffer from the contagious air of a pestilential malady.

Their mother and I knew not what course to take, and our last resource was to go and seek refuge in some inn at Vernon, when the idea was suggested to us of asking an asylum of a venerable old man, who, in the village of Aubevoie, at a little distance from ours, occupied a house large enough to lodge us all, without any inconvenience to himself. This circumstance of my life has something romantic in it.

The old man, who, touched with our situation, was eager to receive us, was one of the monks who had been driven from the neighbouring monastery of Carthusians. His name was *Dom Honorat*. He was older than I. His manners called to mind those of the Anchorets of the Thebaid. This excellent man seemed to be sent by heaven to edify and to console us. He breathed piety, but a piety which was all gentleness, indulgence, affection, and charity, a piety that was truly evangelic. He rarely allowed himself to dine with us; but, for an hour in the afternoon, and somewhat longer in the evening, he used to come and discourse to us of the great objects on which he incessantly meditated, of divine Providence, of the immortality of the soul, of the life to come, of the morality of the gospel; and all this flowed naturally, simply, and from the bottom of his heart, with a lively faith and a touching fervor. It would have been cruel to express a doubt on what formed the consolation of his age and of his

solitude. The soul of this good old man was perpetually in heaven; and it was so grateful to us to raise ourselves to heaven with him, that it would have been inhuman to have wished to make him descend. He raised us from the dejection into which the king's death had thrown us; and, in calling to recollection the words of the confessor, *son of Saint Lewis, ascend to heaven*, "Yes," said he with confidence, "he is now before God; and I am very sure that he is imploring pardon for his enemies." He thought the same of the virtuous martyrs of the 2d of September.

The alleviation which a pious hermit might feel in his situation, by associating with us, was offensive to the Mayor of Aubevoie. At the expiration of eighteen days, he came to tell me that it was time for us to retire. Fortunately, the air of our house was purified; and after having suitably testified our gratitude to him who had so well received us, we returned to our house.

This modest and humble dwelling was my own; I had bought it; but what a fatal change did it announce in our fortune! I had just quitted, near Paris, a country-house that formed our delight, a garden in which every thing abounded; and that smiling retreat was changed, as by the wand of an enchanter, into a species of cottage very small and much decayed. It was here that we were obliged to endeavour to accommodate ourselves to our situation, and, if possible, to live as honourably in poverty as we had lived in plenty. The trial was painful; my literary pleasures were suppressed; the French academy was soon to be destroyed; my pension as a man of letters, the fruit of my labours, was no longer of any value. The only solid property I still had was the little farm at Paray, which the prudent foresight of my wife had induced me to purchase. I was obliged to lay down my carriage, and to turn away even the servant that my old age required. But in this narrow dwelling, where we had scarcely common necessities, my wife had the good understanding and the art to limit our expenses by simplifying our wants; and I may say that our own sad condition touched us feebly, in comparison with the public calamity. The care that I gave to the instruction of my children, the tender part that their mother took in their moral education, and, if I may allow to say it, the excellence of their dispositions, were an inexpressible resource to us in our solitude. They consoled us for a misfortune, which was not the misfortune of their age. At least we forbore to afflict them with it. The storm passes over their heads, used we to say, smiling on them; and for them we have the hope of calmer and serener weather.

But the storm still increased; we saw it extend itself over the whole nation; it was not a civil war; for one of the two parties was passive and disarmed; but on one side it was a jealous hatred; and on the other a melancholy terror.

Millions of men to keep in pay in the armies, and many other excessive expenses, absorbed infinitely more wealth than the contributions of the state and the sale of the property of the clergy and the emigrants could furnish. The paper-money, multiplied

to infinity, destroyed itself; its accelerated fall drew along with it that of credit. Commerce was ruined. The war did not afford sufficient resources in the conquered countries. It was decreed (on the 10th of March, 1793) that the property of the condemned should devolve to the republic; and this was what was called coining money with the guillotine on the *Place de la Revolution*, which overflowed with blood.

Thus wealth became a cause of proscription, and not only men commendable for their merit, the Malesherbes, the Nicolai, the Gilbert-de-Voisin, but men remarkable for their fortune, a Magon, a Leborde, a Durney, a Serilly, and a crowd of financiers, were hurried to death. Thus, when old Magon was brought before the revolutionary tribunal, and asked his name, "I am rich," answered he, and he disdained to say more.

In order to give more latitude to the tables of proscription, those who were denounced, were denoted under the vague names of enemies of the people, enemies of liberty, enemies of the revolution, in fine, under the name of *suspected*; and all those were considered as *suspected* who, either by their conduct, their connections, or their language, had shown themselves the partisans of tyranny (that is to say of royalty) or the enemies of the republic, and in general those to whom certificates of *civism* had been refused. Now, in refusing these certificates, the government was excused from all explanation of the motive and cause of such refusal, by the decree of the 30th of January, 1793; accusation and judgment were likewise exempt from proof. In a decree sentencing *the enemies of the people* to the pain of death, passed the 22d Prairial, year 2, it was said, those are reputed *sach* who seek to destroy liberty, either by force or by artifice; to degrade the national convention and the revolutionary government of which it is the center; to mislead opinion, and prevent the instruction of the people; to deprave morals and corrupt the public conscience; in fine, to blemish the purity of revolutionary principles. The proof necessary to condemn them, added this decree, shall be every kind of material or moral document, that can naturally obtain the assent of a just and rational understanding. The rule for passing judgment is the conscience of the juries, enlightened by the love of the country. Their end is the country's triumph, the ruin of its enemies. If there exist a document of the nature above described, no witness shall be heard.

It was with this equivocal and perfidious language that fair-spoken hypocrisy instituted the jurisprudence and arbitrary proceedings of our criminal tribunals. No proofs, no witnesses, the consciences of the juries! and of what juries? of the organs and supporters of Robespierre, of Lebon, and of Carrier, of Francastel, and of many other tigers, insatiable with human blood.

One of the itinerant executioners of the faction had a guillotine engraved on his seal as an emblem. Another, at his dinner, had one of those instruments on his table, with which he amused himself by cutting off the head of a chicken that had been served up to him; and whilst these made a mockery of the instrument of

their barbarity, others boasted to the convention of their economy and their diligence in the execution of its decrees. "Shooting is too tedious," wrote one of them to the convention, "and powder and balls are thereby expended. We have adopted the plan of putting them (the prisoners) in large boats in the middle of the river; at half a league from the town we sink the boat. Saint-Florent and the other places," added he, "are full of prisoners. They too shall have the patriotic baptism." I need not say what shiverings of horror the raileries of these cannibals caused us. What made humanity shudder, the drownings of Carrier in the Loire, the cannonades with case-shot of Collot-d'Herbois at Lyons, obtained honourable mention in the journals of the convention. The atrocities of Lebon in the Pas-de-Calais were only *forms somewhat severe*, which should be pardoned; and they were pardoned!

A formidable party was suddenly formed in the bosom of the convention against Robespierre; Tallien denounced him. He was instantly outlawed (the 9th of Thermidor), surprised, torn from the town-hall, whither he had fled, and dragged to that scaffold (on the 10th) where he had every day immolated so many innocent victims.

After the death of Robespierre, the committees and the revolutionary tribunal were renewed, and the convention disavowed their past cruelties; but it declared (on the 22d of Frimaire, year 3) "that it would receive no appeal to reverse judgments passed by the criminal tribunals, authorizing the confiscation of property to the use of the republic, and executed during the revolution."

At the same time the fermentation of the public mind was not settled. The society of the jacobins did not forget that it had been all-powerful: it saw itself dispersed, and it could not suffer that this anarchical power, which was its sanguinary conquest, should be usurped by a party that was no longer its own. Its enemies were in vain cautious of giving it offence; it felt the curb, and champed in silence. The convention wanted to weaken it by purifying it; and the committees were charged to unite and prepare the plan of this purification on the 13th of Vendemiaire. All correspondence, and all intercourse between the popular societies were forbidden on the 25th. But the fire lurked beneath the ashes, and to prevent it from spreading was still a vain effort.

The convention put itself on its defence against denunciation, by a decree of guarantee, which regulated the manner in which the trial of a member of the national representation should thenceforth be conducted, passed on the 8th of Brumaire; but this guarantee, in the case of insurrection, was no security; and the tumult began to be threatening around the hall of the jacobins on the 19th. The convention decreed that this hall should be shut; and this decree was sent to the armies and to the popular societies on the 20th. The commotions of the people in the centre of Paris, and in the *fauxbourg* Saint Antoine were but the more furious.

On the 18th of Frimaire, in order to strengthen the party which opposed the league of the jacobins, the sixty-six deputies, put under arrest on the 3d of October, 1793, were brought back to the

convention; and three of the ancient terrorists, convicted of excesses which they had committed at Nantes, were condemned to the pain of death. The act of accusation was pronounced against Fonquier-Tinville, the public accuser, and he was condemned with fifteen of his accomplices. At the same time, Collot-d'Herbois, Barrère, and Billaud-de-Varenne were put on their trial.

Finally, the whole convention took an oath to pursue, even to death, the disciples of Robespierre.

The jacobins seemed at their last gasp. Some young men, assembled in the garden of the *Palais-Royal*, had there burnt a mannikin in the costume of jacobinism, and carried its ashes to the common sewer of Montmartre, with this inscription on the funeral urn: *Pantheon of the Jacobins of the 9th of Thermidor*.

Yet such was the inquietude of the assembly that, among all these acts of vigour, it still gave a signal of alarm and of distress. For so I call the decree, when, foreseeing its own dissolution, it ordained, "that, in case of such dissolution, all the representatives who should escape the parricidal sword, should repair as quickly as possible to Châlons-sur-Marne." The event proved that it had been well foreseen.

On the 1st of Prairial, some women of the populace, having forced open the doors of the hall of the assembly, with cries and with insults that interrupted the deliberations, a crowd of men instantly rushed in with them, and the head of one of the deputies was laid on the table. The conquest would have been secure if the people had profited by the momentary terror it had spread. But the insurgents amusing themselves with seizing the seats that were abandoned to them, one of them, whose name was Romme, had the imprudent vanity to seat himself in the chair of the president, and to lose time by pronouncing decrees there. By these decrees, he ordained the arrestation of the members of the committees of the government, the enlargement of all those detained since the 9th of Thermidor, the recall of Barrère, of Collot-d'Herbois, and of Billaud-de-Varenne. This mad boast of authority lulled the fury of the people; and while he was giving laws, one of the deputies entered the hall at the head of the armed force, drove away and dispersed the multitude, and restored courage and liberty to the assembly.

The blood of the terrorists then began to flow again in a full stream; and the leaders of the popular sedition were executed in the presence of the people.

Thus, between despotism and anarchy, the armed force was the only arbiter, and the chiefs of the conquered party were led to the scaffold.

This was but as a spectacle for the sane part of the nation, that had an equal abhorrence of anarchy and of despotism.

The convention at length felt the necessity of regenerating the republic, by changing, not the principle, but the form of a government which was republican by name, but despotic in reality, and by feigning to divide powers in order to balance them. Such was the object and artifice of the new constitution. In this shadow of fundamental laws, which a commission was charged to frame,



and which it presented on the 5th of Messidor, in the year 3, two legislative councils and an executive directory composed the corps to which the national power was to be confided.

The two councils, one of five hundred, and the other of two hundred and fifty deputies, chosen every year by the majority of votes, in the electoral assemblies, were invested with the power, one of proposing, the other of accepting or refusing the laws, the latter being the regulator and moderator of the former. Thus far the public interest, if the choices were free and sufficiently enlightened, might be in good hands.

But to these two councils were added an executive directory, armed with the public force, in order to maintain order and the laws; and it was there that the most absolute and most tyrannical despotism, of which history affords any example, established and entrenched itself.

The five members who should compose the directory were to be chosen out of fifty candidates proposed by the council of five hundred; and it was to the council of two hundred and fifty (*called the council of ancients*) that it belonged to choose them.

These Pentarchs were to be successively removeable; at first one was to be excluded every year by lot, and replaced; and afterward each was to retire only at the expiration of his five years reign, and in the order of succession.

Thence it came that the best and wisest men were not solicitous to be of the number of the elected, whom chance might exclude at the end of one or two years, and who besides were to run the risks of a first trial.

But all had a right to aspire to these eminent dignities of the state, and to be elected to them more than once. Thus their first care had been to compose the commission, created for framing the constitutional act, of the most ardent, most adroit, and most ambitious republicans; and these had endeavoured to give to this light oligarchy all the authority, force, and consistence possible.

The conduct of the greatest affairs of the state, politics, finances, the relations with foreign countries, commerce, alliances, war and peace, the armies, their formation, their direction, the choice of the generals and their removal, the nomination to military employments, all belonged exclusively to this council of five. In the interior, the police, the use of the armed force, and the right of calling it into action, the right of inspection over the treasury, and over the receivers of the taxes, the management of the public revenues, their distribution and application to the exigencies of the state, without ever being accountable for them; the choice and office of the ministers, employed under their orders, and dismissible at their will; the superintendence of the courts of justice, the immediate dependence of the constituted authorities, and of the agents employed by them in every part of the administration; finally, the right of having, in the departments, even in the smallest towns, commissaries posted as legal spies, and the right of annulling the elections which the people should have made of its magistrates and its judges: such were the prerogatives lavished on

the directory by the constitutional act, without reckoning what it afterward added.

Thus all the means of governing imperiously, of intimidating, and of corrupting; the use of the armed force; the disposal of the treasures of the state; the interest that mercenary men in the armies, in the finances, in all the employments of the state, would have to gain the favour of these all-powerful Pentarchs; the submission of the chiefs to the authors of their fortune, the example they would give of it to the soldiers and to the subalterns; among the magistrates of the people, the fear of being dismissed from their employment, the desire of continuing in it; in the national assembly, the ambition of having for friends the promoters to distinguished places; and those who held in their hands rewards and punishments, and distributed them as they were well or ill served: all this, I say, made the directory a colossal power, before which the councils sank into nothing.

But it was first necessary that the constitution should be accepted; the people too might perceive that all that was proposed to them was but a tyranny deceitfully masked and judiciously organized; it was necessary, beside, to take care that the spirit of it were not changed in the assembly, which the approaching elections were about to form; and this was all managed in the most impudent manner:

## BOOK XX.

THE events which I have just recalled to my memory have so occupied my fancy, that, amid so many public calamities, I have almost forgotten myself. The impression which this mass of misery made on me was indeed so lively, and so deep, that it was very natural that what concerned only myself should have very often been forgotten. Not but that I endeavoured, by diversions of labour and study, to defend myself from these wearisome reflections, whose continued action might have terminated in a dark melancholy, or in a fixidity of ideas, still more dangerous for the weak and frail organs of man.

When my imagination could be diverted by amusing reveries, I wrote new *tales*, less gay than those which I had written in the sun-shine of my life, and the smiling leisure of prosperity; but a little more philosophical, and in a tone that suited better with my age and the circumstances of the times.

When these dreams failed me, I exerted my reason, and I tried to employ the time of my retreat and of my solitude better, by composing, for the instruction of my children, an elementary

course of study, in little *Treatises of Grammar, of Logic, of Metaphysics, and of Morality*, in which I collected with care what I had learned in my reading of different kinds, in order to transmit the fruits of it to them.

Sometimes, to amuse or instruct them by example, I employed our winter evenings in recounting to them by the fire-side some little adventures of my youth; and my wife, perceiving that these recitals interested them, pressed me to write for them the events of my life.

It was thus that I became engaged to write these volumes of my memoirs. I will freely confess, with Madame de Stael, that I have only painted myself in profile; but I wrote for my children.

These recollections were a real comfort and alleviation to me, inasmuch as they effaced, at least, for moments, the sad images of the present, by the gentle dreams of the past.

I now, however, come to an epoch when the interest of public affairs seized on me more strongly and more closely than ever. By my duty as a citizen, I was called to that primary assembly of the canton of Gaillon, where the new constitution was going to be proposed. This was the moment to observe the state and shades of national sentiment, and that observation was interesting; for the problem was to be submitted to discussion, and simultaneously solved by the majority of votes in all the primary assemblies throughout the republic.

In that where I was present, it was evident to me that two parties balanced each other.

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Here the manuscript of the *Memoirs of the life of Marmontel* breaks off. He continued to occupy himself with his literary labours in his little cottage at Abloville, till the month of April 1797, the epoch at which the electoral assemblies were held for the renewal of a third part of the national assembly, in virtue of the articles of the third constitution. He then repaired to Evreux, and collected the suffrages of his department, by which he was expressly charged to defend, in the national council, the cause of the catholic religion, an engagement which he made, and endeavoured to fulfil.

Being named a member of the council of ancients, and returned to Paris, he lived there wholly occupied by his functions till the 18th of Fructidor, in the year 5, when, the department of the Eure being one of those departments of which the elections were declared void, he fled once again to his country retreat, escaping the transportation which most of his friends suffered.

In the latter part of the year 1799, he was seized with a fit of apoplexy, as he was preparing to go and pass a few weeks at Rouen. In spite of the cares of his wife and all medical aid, he could not recover his speech, and seemed to be insensible. He died on the 31st of December, and was buried in his garden by the ministers of the catholic faith.

OPINION DELIVERED BY  
MARMONTEL  
ON THE  
FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

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REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE,

WERE the resolution now proposed no more than the result of the principle established in the constitutional act, nothing could have greater equity. That each should be free in the exercise of the religion he prefers, while respecting public order and obeying the laws, would be an impartial rule, and freedom would lose nothing, but obtain an equal and necessary condition. But to restrain this principle of liberty and equality by prohibiting laws, is it not to infringe? Are these prohibitions so necessary as to make them just? On these points begins the warfare of opinions.

I do not enter the lists with the arms of eloquence: force, energy, and vehemence are no longer mine, but to my age belongs the language of feeling and of truth.

To reduce the question which is submitted to you to its most precise and simple terms, I would distinguish, in religious worship, thought from action.

In religion, thought is absolutely free, for it appertains individually to the man in his relation to God alone.

Action in worship is but conditionally free; it is limited, for it appertains not only to the man, but to social order, to which man is responsible.

In this view, moral action, speaking generally, is dependent on human laws. But how far have human laws the right of restraint? This is the point in question, and I find it decided in Article II, of the rights of man. It is there said that *freedom consists in the power to do whatever will not injure the rights of others*. In the social compact, what are the rights of others? The liberty, safety, and property of each, and the tranquillity of all. Whatever in these respects is innocent ought to be permitted, and every restriction on that freedom of action is unjust.

Let us apply this principle to the exercise of religious worship, and examine how far the precautions of the police, and measures of safety ought to extend.

I first remark that these precautions bear the character of inquietude, distrust, suspicion, and perhaps even secret aversion and repugnance to suffer that which it is wished to hinder, but which it is not safe to forbid.

Politics act with religion as with a jealous rival and enemy, whom she is forced to treat with politeness, but wishes to enfeeble. This politeness seems to me unworthy a sovereign and powerful legislation, the character of which ought to be candour and majesty.

I shall further observe that in our prohibitory laws these hostile propensities are not equally relative to all sects, but, to speak frankly, they regard only one.

For example, to what religion, except the catholic, is the prohibition of ceremonies addressed. Philosophic deism has no churches, it is pure contemplation, mental worship, solitary and silent.

Oriental deism has its temples, assemblies, and solemn festivals, but our laws do not concern themselves with the religion of Confucius nor of Mahomet, nor even expressly with that of Moses.

Polytheism, and the festivals of Ceres or of Cybele are not what it is feared should be celebrated.

Let us be sincere; it is not Christianity itself in general that our prohibitory laws regard, but catholicism alone; for that alone has ceremonies and signs without its temples; that alone obliges its ministers habitually to wear a particular dress. Other sects have nothing of that exterior which our laws interdict.

That apparent equality which presents the phantom of a prohibition common to all sects is but a vain form; in reality, the interdiction of ceremonies and exterior signs attacks only catholicism. It is this also which was supposed dangerous, when it was thought right to preserve ourselves from the *enterprises of the ministers of religion, relative to the civil state of citizens*, as is expressly said in the law of the 7th Vendemiaire.

Let me thus be permitted to interrogate this political enemy of catholic faith, and ask, not as a bigot, but as a legislator, without partiality or the least ostentation of my personal sentiments, what causes of suspicion belonging to this worship or its ministers have given rise to persecutions so scrupulously severe.

If catholicism, like idolatry, bore the emblems of the passions, vices, and crimes deified, it ought no doubt to be abolished, or at least such licentious images ought never to be seen.

But how can symbols, the most modest, of the mildest virtues, be scandalous or injurious? What can there be alarming to manners or the laws in examples of humility, patience, indulgence, self-denial, and universal benevolence?

And what especially is the sign which it is wished to forbid the catholics at their festivals and funerals? The sign of their faith

and hope, their pledge of immortality, the sign of the love of one God, and of his being devoted to the salvation of men. \*

Ah! that this mysterious sign, the object of veneration to so many men respectable for their genius and their knowledge, should be treated with contempt by others who pretend to be more enlightened, more sage. Freedom of thought may permit this, but let us understand what evil can happen to the world from a frontispiece placed on a temple, or the coffin of a christian, or on the tomb of a just man who falls the victim of the wicked! what evil, I ask, can spring from the image of him who breathed his last sigh in requesting his father to pardon his enemies? What is there dangerous in this symbol of peace at a time when conciliation and concord are so necessary, a time when perhaps the only hope of repose and public safety is founded on the forgetting of crimes, and the pardon of injuries?

To you especially, men of guilt, whom the clemency of our laws allows to live, wretches, who have no place of refuge except non-entity, whom mercy drives from the face of heaven and earth, ought you to revolt at the worship of a God, who pardons and who ordains pardon? Oh! rather wish to find this merciful religion every where; believe in God the Redeemer; he is your only hope. What expiation but his can appease your remorse? What other victim will wash away with his blood the blood with which you are covered? Superstitious credulity, exclaim the incredulous, while they insult the most sublime example of the most heroic of all the virtues.

So be it! Be the faith of St. Chrysostom, St. Ambroise, and St. Augustin, of Newton, Pasqual, and Bossuet, be it, if so you please, but folly; for we are not here on controversial theology: I am not now defending the truth of religion, I speak of its innocence, and I ask which of its symbols will it be dangerous to expose to the public, especially after so many ages have made them familiar to the eyes of men?

It is said, that by these symbols it will have distinction, which the law will not admit. If, by distinction, a perceptible difference is understood, it will vainly be attempted to prevent this among religious sects: their temples will be open, and their anthems, rites, and public prayers, will make known their difference. If, by distinction, some prerogative is understood, catholicism will have none, for other sects, like itself, will all be permitted to have their symbols and exterior signs. They form a visible and solemn profession of faith, which all will be free to make, and none allowed to insult. The crescent, the ark of alliance, the tables of the law, all will be ostensible, and, from civil equality, order and peace will result.

But the signs of a creed, which it is not wished should longer predominate, make it more perceptible and powerful over the mind. This is the motive of the coercive laws, which it has been thought proper to impose upon catholicism. Its solemnities, its offices, its pompous festivals, the awful celebration of its

\* *Le signe d' arborer* the cross, or to plant the cross.

mysteries, descending even to rustic processions, which seem to render the blessings of heaven more abundant, when the prayers of the labourers were heard in the fields for the harvests, and still more than all the consolation which religion affords to Nature in the accidents of life, in the bed of sickness, the patience of long suffering, and the agonies of death; all this, I repeat, is thought too powerful over the minds and souls of men. This religion resembles a tree whose umbrageous branches are feared, and therefore are lopped by some, while others endeavoured to lay the axe to the root. Thus have rivals laboured, some to extirpate the catholic religion, and others to despoil it of all which appears to have contributed to its increase or to extend its influence: and it must be allowed, that, following the perverse system conceived, the measure was prudent. A plan of politics, destructive of all morality, could not be better imagined, and those who would deprave have been consistent.

It is well known that catholicism was the profession of all the maxims men would make us abjure, the friend of all the virtues they would banish or proscribe, and the enemy of all the vices licentiousness and impiety are wished to engender.

They well knew catholicism was, of all religions, the most popular and attractive to that class of men that they designed to corrupt and deprave. Its advantage is in offering them consolation; friends who, seated in heaven, interest themselves in their labours, their pains, and their disgraces; a God, yes, a God, the example and model of those humble virtues, of which the people stand in need in their painful condition, and who suffered himself, that he might teach them to suffer.

All this, no doubt, offends the proud spirit, but the people have not this incredulous pride: speak to their hearts, and their understandings are captivated. A God, the friend of the wretched, who collects their tears, and hears their sighs; a God, who sustains their courage and exalts their hopes; a God, who, after momentary afflictions and suffering, promises eternal glory and felicity: this God, the consoler, is too necessary to them not to win their love and faith; and this necessity will make more christians than false philosophy can ever turn to incredulity. Those, who formed a system to lead the people astray, well understood this; they could not drive humanity from the heart, while any traces of a compassionate and charitable religion remained: they reared their scaffolds on the wrecks of the altar.

We must not therefore wonder if minds still impelled by the ill-extinguished fire of the passions, which we have so fatally felt, preserve an invincible antipathy to a religion that lays these passions under restraint. They would find among the people accomplices like themselves, and think themselves lost, if they saw themselves surrounded by the worthy. Peace is their scourge; justice and humanity, whose cries pursue and whose name affright, to them are furies. From the time they invoked the depths of hell to people the earth, heaven they have held in horror; or if, gnawed by remorse, they have endeavoured to pray, the hope of mercy has suddenly forsaken them, and, like

the Macbeth of the poet, they have been obliged to say—I cannot pray.

There is another class of men, less violent, more feeble, not daring to propose the expulsion of catholicism, who still would render it invisible to themselves. All the deserters from this religion are not so entirely detached from it as they pretend to be. The sight of those religious emblems, which their fathers revered, torment their recollection. They feel repugnance to meet, in simple and modest attire, the ministers of a religion they have abandoned. These mysterious ceremonies awaken in them I know not what involuntary feelings, mingled with shame and respect. The bell even, that makes the air resound, recalls them as fugitives, accuses them as infidels, and, whether it announce feast or funeral, it is ever to them an afflicting reproach or an ominous presage.

Hence it has in all ages happened that a catholic who abjures his religion becomes its most cruel and implacable enemy; and it may be said of him as Joad, in *Athalie*, says of Mathon;

*Ce temple l'importune, et son impiété  
Voudroit anéantir le Dieu qu'il a quitté.\**

In fine, according to the principles of good legislation and sound policy, are there not reasons of equity and prudence for keeping all religions in a state of equality, and suffering no one either to be oppressed or to oppress? Nothing more sage, it may be said, than the maintenance of this equality; nothing more just than the regulations which, on one side, restrain the politics of fanaticism, and on the other, religious bigotry; which opposes the progress of any too ardent conversions, and gives no power to sects either to exclude or to make proselytes. Such, in the last instance, was the system of the prohibitory laws, and especially that of *Vendémiaire*.

I do not attack this system, but affirm the principle that the equality which the laws have a right to enforce should confine itself to grant no permitted religion either privilege, precedence, or prerogative of any king, and should consist only in reducing their common advantages to a level; for, in matter of property, it is with religions as with men: it is not in the power of laws to prevent an excellent man from obtaining from other men personal favour, or from exercising over them the superiority of his knowledge and virtues, the power of doing good, the ascendancy of genius, and the gift of persuasion. Neither should the laws be permitted to interdict to any religion its empire over the mind, and the means by which it may attract men, if these means are innocent. The right of equalizing all religions is but the right of being partial to none.

However, should there be one which cannot be truly free without becoming redoubtable, would it not be politically prudent to foresee and guard against danger? Granted: I applaud

\* This temple offends, and his impiety  
Would annihilate the God whom he has abjur'd.



his rule of prudence, but must observe, that most of our revolutionary laws bedeck themselves in vague precautions, cloudy inquietudes, and black distrust of chimerical fears. Nothing is more easy than to envelop innocence itself in the fogs of suspicion: nothing more common than to affect to fear that which we would render odious. Let us beware, legislators, of every opinion lightly conceived, or malignantly suggested. Guard against impressions which the rumours of calumny too frequently make on the friends of truth.

All is susceptible of abuse, the best of things, and the best of religions. But abuse comes from men who must each answer for himself, and who are all watched by the law.

Here then we must enquire whether the spirit of catholicism authorizes or condemns the ills of which it is accused, the crimes committed in its name; if its ministers are criminal, and if the passions, that raise its standards, do not betray that which they affect to serve.

I will not ~~weaken~~ the reasons which men suppose they have to be on their guard against this religion. Here they follow in all their force.

From the time of Clovis, there has been a predominant religion in France, a church exclusively favoured and protected, successively enriched, adorned with dignities, and forming the first of orders in the state. Now, we are told to look forward to its decay and ruin. Despoiled of splendour, deprived of all its privileges, all its dignities, how can it but be feared, after having been thus stripped? Can it be other than an irreconcilable enemy to a constitution which does not allow it any foundation, any common support, and which reduces its priests to subsist on personal charity? Must it not detest a revolution which has profaned, destroyed, or besmeared its altars with blood? which has emptied its temples, and proscribed, imprisoned, banished, and massacred its ministers? No doubt, all this is cause of aggravation, and must exasperate minds that yield to human feelings and passions. But to these passions is opposed the curb of religion, that conquers nature, and which ordains the sacrifice of personal interest, and every resentment; a religion which, from its birth, following the example of its author, only breathes humility, patience, gentleness, obedience to the laws, peace towards men, submission, the most profound, to the decrees of providence, indulgence and love of enemies, the fear, and even the contempt, of the goods of this earth, and the resignation of all which avarice and pride would possess; for such is catholicism; such has been its unalterable character, since a God, I speak his language, *patient to death*, has been its legislator.

We are told the times are changed.

The times, indeed, are changed; but religion is the same. Persecuted or prosperous, it has remained incorruptible; its maxims are what they were when Tertullian lived.

But, if such was the spirit of its first disciples, has it always been that of its priests and pontiffs? Or is it so now? If ambition,

hatred, and vengeance, have so often actuated them; who can answer that they will not always be susceptible of these passions.

Great God, where are we! Can social policy reason thus? What would remain to men of their natural faculties, were the laws to deprive them of all those which sometimes, nay often, have been abused? From this system of fatal suppositions we have seen the prisons filled with the innocent, and the scaffolds loaded and reloaded with victims. In all ages, as is well known, it has been the maxim of tyranny to prefer the safe to the just, and to fetter or oppress whatever it suspected might oppose.

But can this oppressive policy be called ours? The factious exclaim, that the revolution, not being yet atchieved, demands such measures. It is not yet what they wish; and when will it be for those who never think there is sufficient reform; those who still demand proscriptions and massacres? Enough has not yet been done for those banditti, who are still avaricious of pillage, and thirst for blood; nor for those who rejoice in public calamity, and who fear nothing so much as its cessation. But the revolution is consummately ended for that great majority of the worthy, whose only wish was legitimate freedom and equitable government sagely regulated in its forms, and founded on excellent laws. The foundation is laid, and the edifice raised: too firm already to be overthrown, these its foundations can never be shaken.

Thanks to our sufferings, thanks to the return of reason and humanity, the nation, almost wholly, now only demands that legislation which consecrates its rights; and this public universal will, in opposition to faction, is a rampart under the guard of which, and of the laws, freedom reposes.

Thus, in the laws of a free and generous people, whose only wish is to be just and peaceable, foresight is prudent but not suspicious. Precaution and watchfulness only presume offences, which are reasonably presumeable; and in the scale of probability, in the uncertain calculation of impossibles, laws never confound the doubtful with the certain, or the reality of fact with the illusions and phantoms of fear.

Without, therefore, any retrospect to ages, the annals of which are such constant and glorious witnesses for the ministers of the gospel, I ask what have now, in our time, and under our own eyes, been the proofs, the cruel proofs, of their spirit and character? Is it seen in the dungeons where they were heaped without respect, or without compassion for the aged and the infirm? Or at the bottom of the vessels where, with still greater barbarity, crowds of them perished deprived of light, and breathing the impure vapours of a mephitic air? Was it at Nantz, on board the boats, when they were to sink in the Loire? Or at Marseilles, where they were dragged mutilated, but living, on hurdles, to suffer death? I ask, if in these places they were seen irritated, indignant, breathing vengeance, detesting their country, or in the least impatient under the inhumanity inflicted upon them?

What do I say? Where am I led by this just apology? Oh, my colleagues, it is with repugnance that I mention the second of September, and the fatal spots where so many martyrs perished.

Truth obliges me to call to your recollection these abominable massacres; but I do not wish to retrace all their horrors. Far be from us the hideous forms of those ferocious assassins, who, with eyes of fire, mouths foaming with rage, the sword or the axe in hand, waiting for their victims, demanded their prey with the roaring of famished tigers. Let us shudder, but pass onward to a spectacle more worthy of earth and heaven; to that multitude of the virtuous proscribed, who, ranged in their prisons of St. Firmin, the Carmelites, and *St. Germain des Près*, self-collected, kneeling, the body bent, the hands clasped, the eye intent on heaven, imploring the mercy of God in behalf of themselves and their butchers. Vast and profound was the silence when each waited to hear his name. He is called, he rises, embraces his companions, recommends himself to their prayers, and goes to death, like a lamb, without one murmur, one complaint, or a single sigh. Is this the factious, rebellious, and vindictive spirit of perfidious hatred, of which I hear them accused?

But did, or will, those who survive resemble them? Why should we require them all to possess the same heroism? Must virtue still be subjected to the proof of torture? Is martyrdom the touchstone to them all? Some of them may be weak, some may be too sensible to the loss of the wealth of which they have been stripped, and some may lament that they are now sunk in indigence. Surely it would be too-unfeeling to reproach the wretched, for the relief which complaint affords. If the spirit of the gospel live in them, misfortune itself cannot render them vindictive, perfidious, factious, or enemies to that order to which Providence has subjected them. This is what I affirm, and what cannot be denied. Entering on their sacred functions, they swore to follow the maxims and examples of their divine legislator; and what right have we to presume them capable of infidelity or apostasy? By what right suppose them no longer to be Christians?

We wish to be assured, that they are such in their hearts? Ask this question of the nation which, jealous of showing itself more magnanimous than our own, has so humanely welcomed, so generously relieved, and so respectfully treated them in their misery! Ask the brave French soldier of Italy, who, with so much tender piety, waited on and comforted them in the military hospitals: for faith will surely not be denied to the testimony of the warrior, by whom they have been so highly praised.

There are no plots of which they have not been suspected, or crimes of which they are not accused; but always in a body, and without proof, or naming individuals. What among so many accusers, is there not one who points to the culprit? *They are suspected.* Such has been, even under the reign of terror, the form of denouncing, and of personal accusation. They are suspected! Of what? of incivism, of royalism? That is, their thoughts and feelings are suspected, and suspicion itself dares no more. What a triumph to innocence to behold detraction expire on the lips of the detractor!

“ Oh no ! ” say the enemies of the priests, “ not in public, not in the pulpit, do they dare to profess their seditious doctrine. They have a private tribunal, the inviolable secrecy of which renders them secure; and to the ear of which they preach their fanaticism of kings, and their hatred to the republic.” To accusations like these, defence seems impossible. What proof is there that the confessor does not more secretly do the thing of which he is accused? He does it not: this is proved, even to demonstration.

The secrets of confession are impenetrable only on one part. If the penitent find that the confessor intends to abuse his office, the better to instil the spirit of revolt and faction, he has a right to denounce him as perfidious and sacrilegious. How, then, has it happened that, since the revolution began, among so many young enthusiasts of republican maxims, so many spies and accusers for whom, as you have seen, nothing was inviolable, to whom neither friendship, gratitude, nature itself, nor the ties of blood had any thing sacred, while pretexts alone were wanting to despoil and exterminate the priesthood, how has it happened, I say, that not one instance of this kind of seduction has been known? No, not the tribunals of revolutionary terror have ever heard them mentioned. Thus the crime, which imposture itself has not dared to invent, we wish the laws to suppose. And the only guarantee that is asked against a sacrilegious presumption, thus enormous, is a declaration of obedience to the laws! What tie is this to men so criminal and impious as to deny, privately, that which they have publicly professed and preached from the pulpit?

Men whose hypocrisy is so profound, as to dare approach the altars of the God of truth!

No, with regard to priests, let the principle be observed, the sacred principle of never presuming crime, and of believing man innocent till we have full authority to think him guilty: or, if priests must be expected from this grand rule of natural equity, they must all be driven from France.

But, in addition to the negative proofs in their favour, there is an authentic and positive one; and that is the loud, solemn, and unanimous voice of the people, which every where resounds. They all reclaim their priests; and, believe me, my colleagues, they know them well! They are not sacrilegious, factious, and perfidious culprits, perturbators, and conspirators, whom they demand. They are the friends of peace, equitable arbitrators, wise peace-makers, and faithful depositaries of their secret griefs. In fine, in them the people would recover their morality and their religion. They keenly feel what dissolution, corruption of manners, impudence in vice, audacity in every crime that can escape the law, enmities, family dissensions, and fatal relaxation in the ties of nature itself, have followed the banishment of these evangelical pastors. They have a full sense of how much they need such guides, their advice, their support, and their instruction, that they may be just and good in the midst of the wicked. This they have declared to us with an affecting degree of candour, and thus have addressed us:

“ On you, whom we have chosen to be the organs of our just reclamations, obtain for us our churches and our priests ; give us those again, who have taught us the blessedness of living and dying well.”

When we promised to act like men worthy of their confidence, tears and benedictions expressed their joy. These are faithful and irreproachable witnesses, who do not reason, but who know their interests, and feel their wants.

Imagine, legislators, they will not less feel how injurious to the spirit of their religion, and the manners of its ministers, will be the distrust expressed by a law, which will distress them by unnecessary precautions.

In the council of five hundred, the opinion of forbidding catholicism, its ceremonies, costumes, and exterior signs, has prevailed. But laws, which the people do not feel the reason of, to them are bad. And what reasons, for example, can be given to country people for the suppression of bells, and that resounding signal which calls them so far to their religious duties ? And in what way is this manner of assembling them ridiculous ? Their bells are dear to them, as well from want as from habit : their ears are accustomed to the sound ; religious sentiments have been attached to it from their infancy ; and, rest assured, that to be deprived of it will to them be a misfortune. And how on this point shall we be consistent with ourselves ? Or by what means reconcile, thus gratuitously, so grievous a privation with our own intention of making our laws beloved ?

But the sound of a bell may be the signal of sedition. Alas ! seditions are in no want of signals ! Let us rather avow it may be the salutary signal of distress, as when towns are on fire ; and that it may announce to all the incursions of banditti, so that, in the imminent dangers of night and solitude of sleep, a village attacked may call for aid from the neighbouring villages. Thus it is not so puerile an interest as we have been taught to believe, which men, instructed by misfortune, place as a public safeguard, and the most sonorous instrument that the genius of the arts has hitherto invented.

Will not the people suppose that, to forbid the costume of the priesthood will be not less gratuitous and arbitrary ? They well know that it is not at the altar alone, their pastor ought to appear venerable. They are aware that the decency and dignity of his character is supported by a dress that is simple, modest, but distinct, such as shall remind him of the manners that befit and the respect that he owes to himself.

But, it is said, the law requires to see him only as a citizen. What has the law to do with the colour or the form of the dress he wears ? Is it a distinction of exception to the law ?

If priests are suspected, it would, on the contrary, be a measure of safety to require them to be known by their dress. What then is the motive for this interdiction of costume ? Is it the hope that, mingled with, and undistinguished among the crowd of the corrupt, they will be more at liberty to imbibe their manners, and at once degrade themselves and their ministry ? I confess that, in

these arbitrary laws, I can only discover marks of aversion to the catholic religion; and the more I think, the less I can conceive what may be the reason.

The royalism, and supposed repugnance to republican laws, of which religion is accused, form a gratuitous imputation, which facts, over all Europe, have denied. The grossest ignorance alone can credit it. I therefore will not condescend to examine it further.

The deference, or, if you please, the obedience of the catholic priests to the authority of the Roman church, was nothing less, in the clergy of France, than a passive dependence; and civil order has long been kept distinct and separate. With respect to the doctrine of indivisible unity, it belongs to thought, and that we leave at liberty.

But it is said, that this doctrine renders catholicism exclusive and intolerant. True, exclusive in the persuasion that, with respect to rule and faith, truth is single; and that truth is professed, without alteration or mixture of error; and hence its intolerance; that is, a rigid refusal to associate in hope with any one who has not the same faith. This appears to be the best founded reproach that has been made to catholicism, and this shall be fully explained, that it may be fully refuted.

When intolerance and the spirit of making proselytes unites, is not that religion a redoubtable scourge to every other? What, we are asked, is it so little to declare itself irreconcilable, to attack, to pursue, to hunt in their domains, and continually to carry off their disciples? I shall not enquire into the number of its conquests, but they are the result of persuasion, and are therefore irreproachable.

I will go further, and imagine it possible, nay, probable, that catholicism, without aid or support, and solely in virtue of its moral goodness, or from its natural agreement and analogy with the spirit and character of nations, should make all the progress which is feared. I maintain that this indefinite, interminable power, will be no other than the very innocent effect of legitimate freedom, and the simple exercise of the rights of thought, which the laws ought ever to respect.

I will allow it was not so with that persecuting, intolerant tyranny, which flaming zeal and blind bigotry exercised, in the name of the catholic religion, while it was dominant: I constantly attacked the abuse of that power which would command thought. I have encountered it in the presence of false doctors, who, dishonouring the gospel, provoked violence and constraint in its name. Face to face, I told them that their dungeons, their flames, and their tortures, were truly abominable to God and man, and that they placed the tiger on the altar of the lamb. What I then said, I do but now repeat, namely, that religious wars, the crimes of absurd zeal, and the impious policy that committed them in the name of the God of peace, mercy, and love, were but the crimes of men, the errors and guilt of kings. Not only the gospel, but all those who ever professed it, in its primitive purity and true spirit, have decried these crimes. *Our arms,*

*say they, are not of fire or of sword; our religion has no force but that of persuasion, gentleness and mercy are its characteristics; it is only to be known by its fruits; and it should be defended by dying for it, and not by inflicting death. To employ chains, torments, and evil, is not to defend; but to bring it to disgrace and shameful profanation.*

Such was once the language and the spirit of the disciples of the gospel; what followed was the delirium of the human passions, too often inflamed by pride and power, and the ambition to rule and to subjugate. If, therefore, under feeble kings, and easy to deceive, the abuses have been so excessive as to become redoubtable, they will no longer be the same under a government in which liberty of thought is numbered among the rights of man, and inviolably maintained by the law.

Citizen colleagues, let us impart to these laws that characteristic dignity which is their due.

Suspicion, inquietude, and timid precaution are the attributes of weakness, and, while pitied, should be pardoned. Confidence, fortitude, noble candour, and generous indulgence, appertain to power, which disdains to encircle itself with suspicion.

I have said enough; representatives of the people, concerning the repugnance which I shall feel to vote for the declaration which is demanded of the priesthood, in order to form a part of a republican government. I regard the submission of this body as an indispensable duty, which each good priest may, without scruple, engage to perform.

But, since citizens are all equal in the eye of the law, why should not the law be equal toward them all, and hold neither restriction nor exception among its subjects.

Priests, it is said, are admitted to functions that require a special guarantee. But others, as well as myself, have shown how useless would any guarantee become on the part of good priests; and how weak and delusive it would be with respect to the wicked. To God himself, they have promised fidelity to the laws under which they live. If this oath be not respected, none will be respected. Who will fear perjury to man, if he fear it not in the presence of God?

But why then refuse to promise before the law, what has been promised before God himself? Ah! *why!* Because it is feared that the law, under the vague and confused term submission, tacitly includes something which ought not to be promised. These, I grant, are false alarms. But, legislators, scruples are natural to souls whom innocence and piety make fearful, lest they should offend in what they do not understand. How virtuous, how humane is it to respect this virtuous delicacy!

In fine, after long afflictions and cruel persecutions, he whose fears are not yet removed may be permitted to look around; and if, in the conditions imposed on him, he thinks he still perceives any token of malevolence, he becomes disturbed, and ought to be undeceived.

Yes, colleagues, be it ours to believe minds tempest-troubled, still in astonishment at the thunder-bolts that have fallen around them. They are in dread of snares; let us prove to them that our

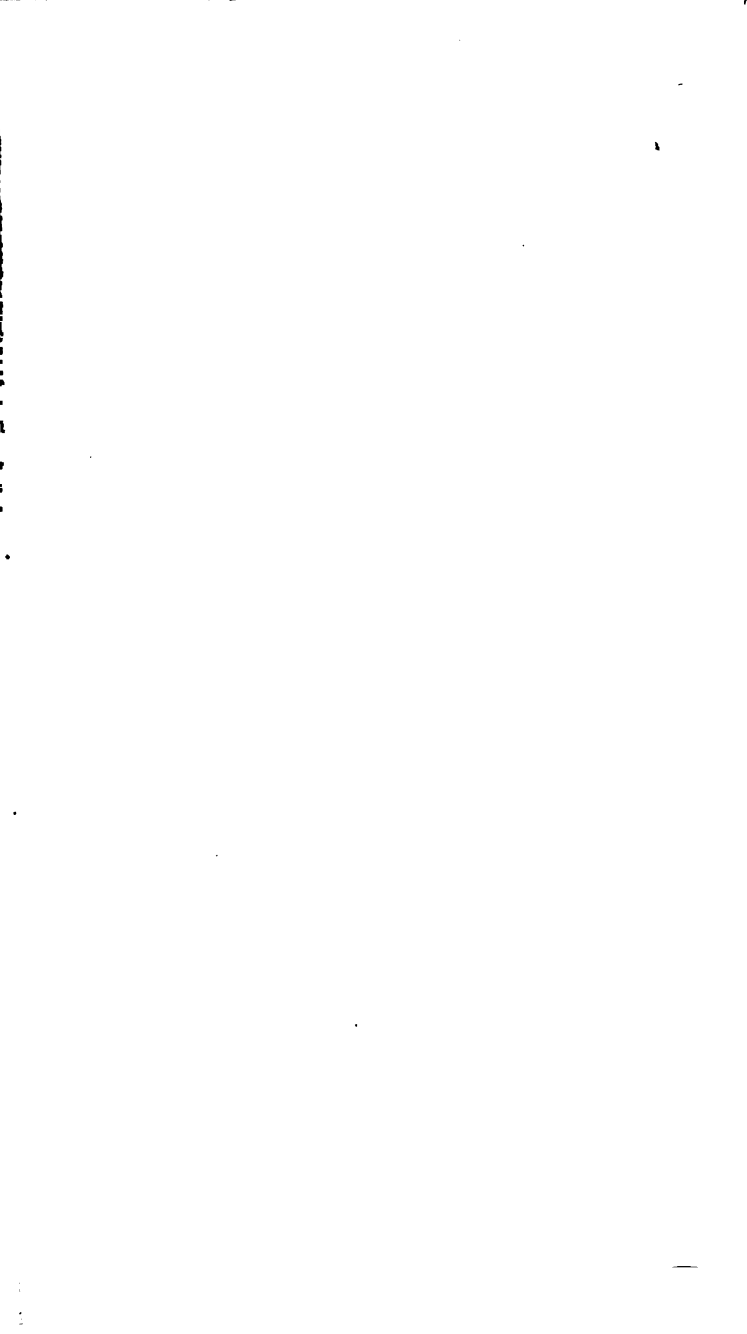
laws have none. They are humbled and afflicted at our distrust; be it ours to secure their fidelity by a noble and sincere esteem. Wearied as they are by calamity, they ask but for repose; but they would ally it to innocence: well, let us leave nothing for the timidity of conscience to fear. No; the fruits of indulgence and beneficence can never be wasted when the heart is imbued with the purest morality.

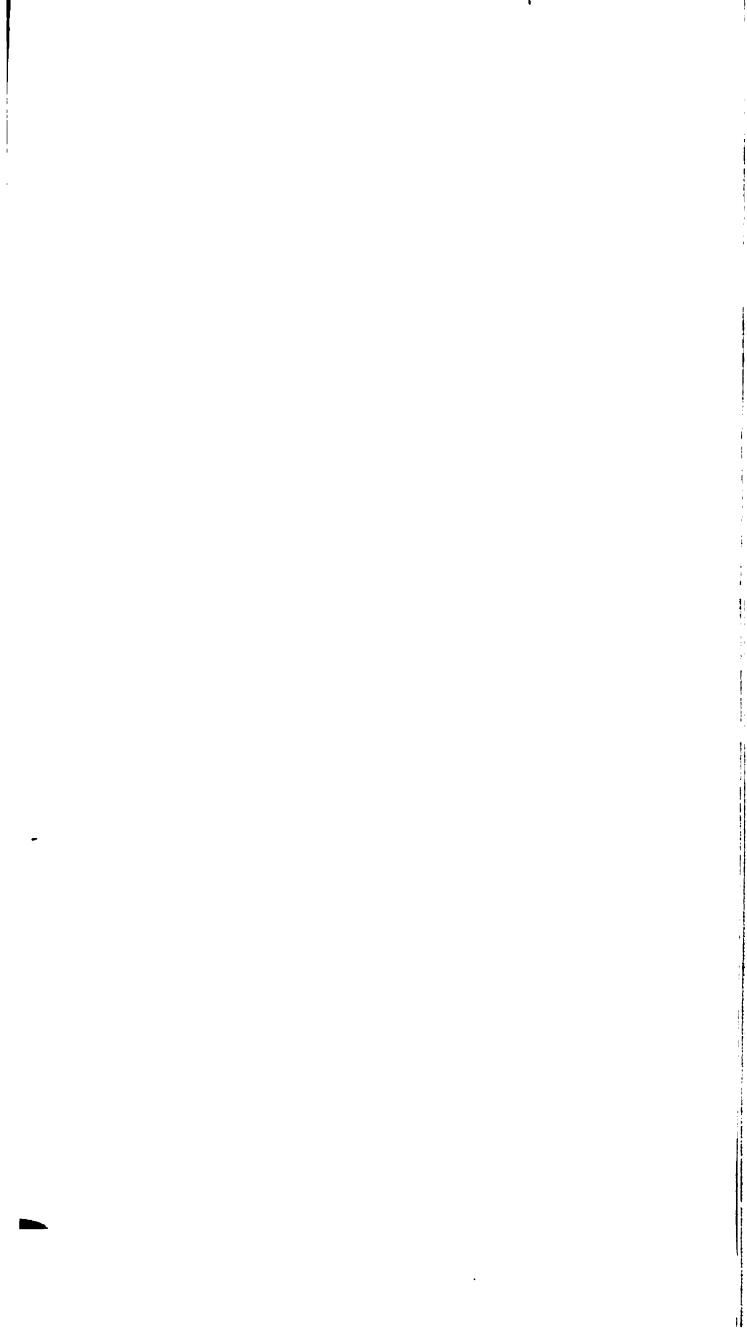
I vote, that the same religious liberty be continued, which was granted by the constitutional act, without requiring the ministers to give any other pledge for their fidelity than their religion, their conscience, and their God.

FINIS.

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